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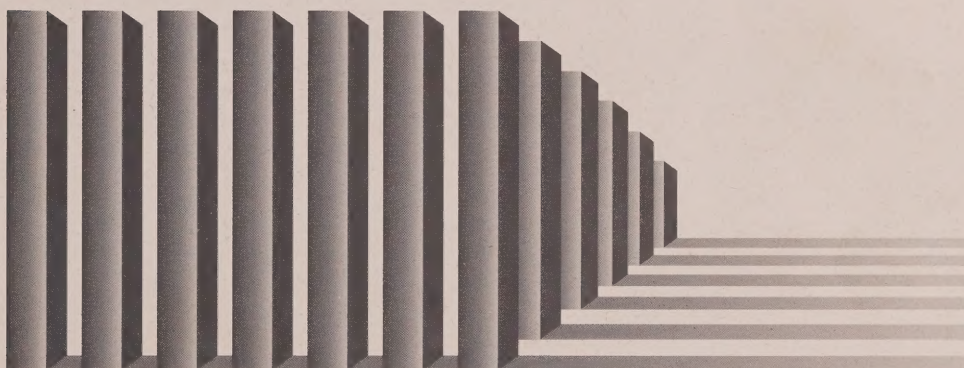
Challenging the Cultural
and Attitudinal Barriers
to Women
in the Public Service

Consultation Group on
Employment Equity for Women

June 1995

Canada

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Looking to the Future

Challenging the Cultural and Attitudinal Barriers to Women in the Public Service

Consultation Group
on
Employment Equity for Women

The Consultation Group on Employment Equity
for Women

dedicates this study
to the memory
of

Jean W. Edmonds

Exemplary
Public Service employee,
humanitarian and role model

The first woman to reach the Executive Group
of the Public Service of the Government of Canada

Chair of the 1988 Task Force
on Barriers to Women in the Public Service

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PREFACE

The Public Service of Canada is changing. New policy issues, technological change, financial constraint, increasing diversity, and demographic shifts must be confronted and addressed by the Public Service as it strives to carry out its mission in a way that reflects the values and realities of contemporary Canadian society.

As members of the Public Service, we should all take pride in how well we have been meeting these challenges. And yet we recognize that the process of renewal must continue if we are to succeed. Accountability, transparency, and equity must guide our efforts. Success will depend, too, on our ability to profit from self-examination.

The author of this report, the Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women, shares the goal of ensuring that Canada maintains a Public Service that commands worldwide respect for its integrity and effectiveness. The Group's innovative inquiry provides a timely reminder that achieving this goal is impossible without a Public Service culture that takes pride in having women equitably represented at every level, and within every occupational group. All Public Service employees must be equally respected, valued, and well-employed, regardless of gender.

In 1991, four consultation groups on employment equity were formed to serve as sounding boards and to advise the Secretary of the Treasury Board and deputy ministers on the recruitment, retention, and advancement in the Public Service of members of the designated employment equity groups (women, visible minorities, Aboriginals, and persons with disabilities). Each consultation group is comprised of a representative cross-section of members from the particular designated group. The Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women is one of these groups.

The two earlier reports of the Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women, *Gender Balance: More Than the Numbers* and *Case Studies in Best Practices in the Employment of Women*, provided constructive contributions that showed the close link between Public Service renewal and achieving gender equity. This report continues that course.

The Consultation Group's objective in undertaking this report was to take stock of progress in removing barriers to women in the Public Service since the release in 1990 of the government-commissioned report, *Beneath the Veneer*. That report noted that the principal obstacles for women were cultural and attitudinal and were often deeply ingrained. The report stressed the responsibility of managers throughout the Public Service to bring about the necessary changes.

The Consultation Group's findings are based on research undertaken in mid-1993. This research showed that there had been limited progress in gender equity in the Public Service since the release of *Beneath the Veneer* and new concerns were emerging that needed attention, given the present realities of resource constraint. The Consultation Group developed an approach based on informal dialogue over the period since then that cut across hierarchical and departmental lines in the Public Service to explore the issues

raised by its findings and to consider the actions to bring about change. These consultations provided an opportunity to further test the findings and confirmed that the issues identified continued to be valid. This report is the culmination of that process.

The Consultation Group's discussions have been effective. The understanding generated by this dialogue led to immediate action in a number of areas related to the recommendations in this report. Actions taken to date include better explaining employment equity, improving the harassment policy, strengthening accountability for results on gender equity, and providing new training modules for senior managers on workplace equity issues.

Achieving gender equity is a fundamental management concern. Deputy ministers recognize their accountability for achieving results in their departments through their managers. We must all recognize too, the close link between the cultural and attitudinal changes needed to attain gender equity and those needed for the success of Public Service renewal.

Each member of the Public Service can make a difference. The Consultation Group's findings and recommendations deserve close attention. This report provides a sound basis on which to build a dialogue with employees on the actions each can take to bring about gender equity in the Public Service.

Robert J. Giroux
Secretary of the Treasury Board
and Comptroller General of Canada

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The focus group discussions outlined in this report were undertaken in mid-1993. Following these discussions, the Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women tested and assessed these findings further, consulting widely and at all levels within the Public Service. It is the view of the Consultation Group that the issues raised in these discussions remain valid today. In fact, downsizing and fiscal restraint in the Public Service have increased the need to ensure that we are using all our human resources efficiently and effectively. Employment equity, with its emphasis on cultural and attitudinal change and improved human resource management practice, can be a cornerstone for the important current goal of Public Service renewal.

We welcome the continued commitment of the Public Service leadership to employment equity for women in the Public Service. The support and attention this Report has received since its inception in May 1993 is but one indication of this commitment. Although we have not tried to capture every change that has occurred during our consultation phase, we are encouraged by the significant improvements that have already been launched over the past year.

The Consultation Group is responsible for the content of this report, including the assessment and recommendations presented.

Members of the Consultation Group during this project

Cynthia Binnington	Privy Council Office
Debbie Cunningham	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Barbara Darling	Department of Finance Canada
Renée Godmer	Human Resources Development Canada
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Looking to the Future:
Challenging the Cultural and Attitudinal Barriers
to Women in the Public Service

In 1990, the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service concluded in its report, *Beneath the Veneer*, that cultural and attitudinal barriers were blocking women from full and equitable participation in the Public Service and that management had to initiate, manage, and demonstrate the necessary change.

The Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women examined what changes have occurred for women in the Public Service since the Task Force offered its recommendations and whether the prevailing culture and attitudes in the Public Service support gender equity.

The report of the Consultation Group, *Looking to the Future: Challenging the Cultural and Attitudinal Barriers to Women in the Public Service*, shows that, while progress has occurred on some fronts, there has been little change in the crucial area of cultural and attitudinal barriers to women in the Public Service since the work of the Task Force. Although the numbers of women have improved slightly and many women have successful careers, women do not yet find the Public Service to be an equitable workplace. There was no evidence of a renaissance in the Public Service, nor of a deeply felt organizational commitment to workplace equity for women.

The Consultation Group undertook a focus group study that involved federal Public Service employees from the executive entry level and up, and a literature review of pertinent material issued since 1990. Both considered the impact of the current environment of economic restraint, organizational downsizing and renewal under the pervasive element of uncertainty. The findings of both proved consistent and mutually supportive. The Public Service is not alone in its experience with gender equity.

The report shows that the Public Service workplace provides different experiences for women and men, and that views of the workplace differ depending on gender. Generally, men were unaware of the problems and concerns of women. As the focus groups showed, men at senior levels did not see these issues as significant, nor as issues they should concern themselves with personally, or as managers. Similarly, these men did not see gender imbalance in the workplace as their problem nor as their responsibility as senior managers. They were also unaware that women generally found working relations with male colleagues to be "non-existent or civil at best."

In considering perceptions of focus group participants about their female colleagues, the report observes the inconsistency between perceptions and personal experience. Many participants shared the perception that employment equity policies have resulted in Public Service appointments of some senior-level women that were not based on competence. However, from their personal experience in working with women at senior levels, the participants generally agreed that these women were competent and effective in their jobs.

Issues of concern to women that were examined included performance assessment, selection for development and advancement; balancing work and family; and an environment that is tougher on women than on men. It is through these aspects of the workplace that women can encounter the cultural and attitudinal norms of a traditional male-dominated culture that can impede or prevent their advancement and success at work.

The Workplace

The report first looks at the workplace, considering its culture, values and attitudes, and the impact of restraint and uncertainty. On examination, it is evident that the Public Service workplace, in general, is still a traditional male-dominated culture — hierarchical, centralized, and not encouraging to women. The Consultation Group concluded that these traditional cultural norms are the root cause of the barriers women experience. Restraint and uncertainty — having to do more with less and worrying about job retention — make the goal of gender equity even more challenging for managers who find the workplace increasingly competitive, focused on the short term, and stressful.

Impact of Workplace Culture and Behaviour

Workplace culture and behaviour have definite influences on women's achievement of employment equity. Foremost, they affect three factors that are key to attaining gender equity in the workplace: women's competence at work, top management's commitment to gender equity, and employees who value employment equity.

Findings from both the literature review and the focus group study show that women are just as competent in the workplace as men under similar circumstances and given similar abilities and effort. Senior-level women in the Public Service believe, however, that even though the system has acknowledged their competence, they have to work harder, meet tougher standards, and bear greater personal cost than most of their male colleagues to move ahead in their careers.

The focus groups show that in the Public Service there is widespread misunderstanding about employment equity and about the policies for attaining it, with generally negative perceptions of these policies. There was little evidence that gender equity is appreciated as a core Public Service value.

The leadership role in achieving gender equity, based on an understanding of the aims and policies, must come from management, starting at the top. The attitudes and practices of senior managers regarding employment equity for women are critical to success. All managers must "walk the talk," which is not perceived to be the case at present.

A System Tougher on Women

The report further shows how the current system can be especially tough on women in the Public Service because of the cultural norms and resulting barriers. Women in the focus groups report that the informal, invisible, and pervasive presence of "old-boys' networks" can be a major impediment for women. These networks and the associated double standards that apply to women, affect women in many ways, such as tougher appraisals and limited access to opportunities for development and advancement. Women at all levels may be underemployed and "channelled" into "pink ghettos" — occupational areas deemed suitable for women — and prevented from working in non-traditional occupations, particularly in line operations, and in regional and district workplaces. Suggested approaches for improving the prevailing inequitable situation include: mentoring; establishing a "critical mass" of qualified women in occupations and offices where women traditionally have not worked or are few in number; ensuring that the selection systems for development and advancement opportunities are fair and effective; and providing continuing education and development to women.

Both women and men in the Public Service report growing pressure and difficulty in balancing work and family, with evidence that the pressures are greater for women with family responsibilities. It is interesting that these women have learned to manage stress better than their male colleagues. The report indicates that, nevertheless, many men do not see work-family balance as a personal responsibility to resolve, nor as a management issue. Although attaining a balance is important to the ongoing effectiveness and productivity of employees at all levels, management attention to developing feasible practices that recognize and address the life cycle responsibilities of contemporary employees has been inadequate.

Another significant difficulty for women is harassment, be it sexual, gender-based, or an abuse of power. In many cases, harassment stems from attitudinal and cultural bias so that women face a risk of being victimized to a greater extent than do men. The report determines that the issue is widely misunderstood and this misunderstanding requires correction. This entails instituting new Public Service policies and practices that aim to prevent harassment and, where it occurs, expect management to deal with it fairly and expeditiously.

Some women experience a double challenge in the Public Service workplace. Besides facing challenges because of their gender, women can also face unique problems because they are in administrative support occupations, they are Aboriginal, have a disability, or are in a visible minority, or they work in the regions and districts, line operations, and non-traditional occupations.

Many focus group participants felt that it would be potentially career-limiting to initiate change to improve their situation, be it against harassment, to achieve family-career balance, or to achieve more fairness. It was better to "play the game."

Conclusions

The report underlines the finding that senior managers and executives generally are not aware of the workplace issues and problems that confront their female employees and colleagues compared to men. Many do not seem to appreciate the fundamental unfairness to women of existing inequities and practices. Nor do they appear to realize that issues that are problems for women are, in fact, generally broader human resource management issues and that it is their role as managers to bring about the necessary changes. They need the skills and understanding to address the underlying root cause — an outdated workplace culture and attitudes. Where women's progress has been occurring, it is principally through the determination and efforts of individual women and managers.

It is only fair and practical to make full use of all the human resources at hand and to help all employees use their full potential, particularly in the current environment of restraint and increasing challenge. The Consultation Group stresses the close link between the workplace cultural transformation needed to attain gender equity and that needed under Public Service renewal to establish a workplace that is fair, performs well and uses resources effectively. Gender equity in the Public Service can benefit everyone. It is "good business."

Just as the Task Force on Barriers to Women concluded earlier, *Looking to the Future* states that change must come and it must come from the top levels of the Public Service. The necessary transformation into a fair and equitable workplace can happen only when all senior managers demonstrate that they understand the problem of inequity in the workplace and then themselves demonstrate fair and equitable practices to achieve gender balance in the workplace.

Recommendations

The recommendations aim to make the Public Service a gender-equitable workplace. Key to realizing this objective is ensuring that all employees understand that gender equity is only right and fair, and that it is every employee's responsibility to make it work.

The Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women offers seven principal recommendations:

- The present Public Service workplace culture needs to be modernized so that it functions well, is fair, and effectively employs everyone, regardless of gender.

- Explicit departmental and managerial accountability for gender equity is essential.

- All employees must fully understand the importance and value of gender equity in the workplace.

- Departments must recognize their employees' need to balance work and family.

- The present policies on harassment should take a new and preventive approach.

- The Public Service Commission needs to do more to develop and retain a pool of qualified women for the executive level.

- Each department's employment equity plan should include a strategy for creating a workplace culture and attitudes that help achieve gender equity.

Today's organization that performs well must have both culture and employment strategies that use resources effectively, creating a fair and decent workplace, valuing and fully challenging all employees regardless of gender. All employees must know they can make a difference in achieving gender equity and in creating the workplace of tomorrow.

INTRODUCTION

Why This Report?

It has been more than seven years since the Canadian government's Task Force on Barriers to the Advancement of Women in the Public Service carried out its ground-breaking research, and more than four years since that Task Force released its 1990 report, *Beneath the Veneer*.

Beneath the Veneer concluded that the major barriers to the advancement of women in the Public Service were cultural and attitudinal, and recommended that management address this problem. The Task Force advised that employment equity for women would not be achieved unless these barriers were removed.

Beneath the Veneer concluded that the major barriers to... women in the Public Service were cultural and attitudinal, and... that management [should] address this problem.

The Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women had two objectives in carrying out the studies that led to this report. The first was to assess the progress since *Beneath the Veneer*. The second was to determine whether, in 1994, the prevailing culture and attitudes of the Public Service workplace support gender equity. (For more information on concepts and definitions used in this report, see Appendix A, Notes to Readers.)

The Consultation Group wanted to know whether the barriers the Task Force identified continue to impede progress on employment equity for women. (For more information on the Consultation Group and its work, see Appendix B. Appendix C gives more information on the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service.) It also wanted to determine if there is any cause for concern in the ability of managers to achieve the needed changes, considering other challenges of their working environments — notably, fiscal restraint and downsizing, combined with the new initiatives on Public Service renewal.

The Consultation Group found that, while progress had occurred on some fronts, there has been little progress since *Beneath the Veneer* in changing the cultural and attitudinal barriers to women in the Public Service. Women do not yet find the Public Service to be an equitable workplace.

The Consultation Group found that... there has been little progress... in changing... [these] barriers...

The changes...
recommended in this
report [should] contribute
to better human resource
management... generally.

The changes and initiatives recommended in this report were developed not only to foster a positive transformation in the culture and attitudes women experience at work, but also to contribute to better human resource management practices generally, in the spirit of Public Service renewal. Many of the problems identified by the focus group study participants were portrayed as "women's issues." In fact, these problems resulted from human resource management practices that were as problematic for men as they were for women — they were really "management issues."

...the Public Service
must focus on "more
than the numbers"
of women.

This report continues to underline the earlier findings of the Consultation Group that the Public Service must focus on "more than the numbers" of women. Instead, attention should focus on adopting a culture that recognizes the value of diversity and on actively monitoring and rewarding management results on gender equity each year.

We also point out that many of the observations and conclusions in this report can apply to other employment equity groups, not just to women.

The aim... is to foster
understanding... of
gender equity and
employment equity, and
to promote agreement on
actions needed...

The aim of the Consultation Group is to foster understanding on issues of gender equity and employment equity, and to promote agreement throughout the Public Service on actions needed to achieve employment equity for women. The challenge for the Public Service is to be open to dialogue and learning on these issues.

Background

...many women have had
successful careers in the
Public Service...

Despite the obstacles to employment equity, many women have had successful careers in the Public Service and have made significant contributions.

Views about the role of women in society have changed in major ways over the life of the present generation. The Public Service has consistently been a leader in reflecting these changes in its employment practices, resulting in steady improvements in workplace equity for women.

For example, the Public Service regulations prohibiting the employment of married women were removed in 1955. By 1972, the first woman had reached the executive level. By 1983, the 227 women in the Executive group accounted for about six per cent of the total employees in this group.

Progress towards achieving employment equity has continued in the six years since the research of the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service. The most recent data available, to the end of 1993, show that women constituted 47 per cent of the Public Service. Women accounted for 18 per cent of the executive level, although they continued to be relatively more concentrated in the lower ranks than men. A number of deputy minister and assistant deputy minister level positions are held by women, and women now work in many non-traditional occupations such as financial administration, transport, and meteorology. There is a better balance between women and men in entry-level recruitment in many career areas. There have also been a number of legislative changes that will anchor employment equity more firmly within the federal Public Service. The *Financial Administration Act* has been amended to legislate a base for employment equity and an employment equity Bill is before Parliament.

Other initiatives also show commitment to the principle of employment equity for women in the Public Service. Two new programs, which are designed to be gender-blind, assess candidates for the executive level and for the recently instituted Management Trainee Program. The Management Trainee Program brings promising new management talent into the junior ranks and provides a structured program of training and development assignments. The Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD) and the Public Service Commission (PSC) have also introduced new programs to support the development of women and to provide training for managers and supervisors on managing a diverse workforce.

Yet many women beyond the entry level have been reporting to Consultation Group members that the obstacles women face are not disappearing and indeed may be worsening. They see little change in women's representation in "non-traditional" occupations or in the senior levels of line operations. Many report being isolated and excluded from traditional informal networks that provide crucial career development support.

...the obstacles women face... may be worsening.

The Public Service of Canada, like many other organizations in the public and private sectors of industrialized countries, is facing many uncertainties. These uncertainties stem from pressures to change the Public Service culture and for it to become more effective and flexible, but within a continuing context of resource constraint and organizational downsizing. Within this environment, the federal government has placed a high priority on renewing the Public Service. The aim of this cultural transformation is to develop and entrench the

..the federal government has placed a high priority on renewing the Public Service.

values, attitudes, and skills needed for organizations that perform well.

Yet, even as the Public Service continues this process of renewal, there are concerns that these uncertainties, resource cutbacks, and other constraints may have counterproductive effects on gender equity. Instead of building an organization that values all employees regardless of gender, there is a real risk that gains in employment equity to date may be jeopardized and that further progress towards full employment equity may lose its momentum.

The Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women recognizes that realizing cultural and attitudinal change takes time, even under the most favourable circumstances. Our 1992 report, *Gender Balance: More Than the Numbers*, also underlined the importance of top-level leadership and the active efforts of managers at all levels in making progress on the cultural change needed to remove barriers to employment equity for women. Given the pressures on managers in the current climate, we wanted to assess whether sufficient management attention was being given to the challenge of improving gender equity in the workplace.

The Consultation Group concluded that we needed to take stock of these concerns. Sufficient time had elapsed since the release of *Beneath the Veneer* for the direction and degree of progress to be evident, for the role of management in contributing to change to be apparent, and for areas of concern to be identified. This report provides the results of our stocktaking.

Approach to the Report

The report provides the views of the Consultation Group as a result of its deliberations and consultations based on two major analyses carried out by the research firm, Environics-DRZ. These were a focus group study and a literature review.

- The *focus group study* was based on a series of structured focus groups and one-on-one interviews conducted in May and June 1993, with federal Public Service employees at the executive entry level and at the level to which this group typically reports. These levels were selected because of the richness of other data and literature about them.

Participants in this group also provided a perspective from two viewpoints: as employees, and as senior managers or executives. Separate focus groups were held for women and men, as well as groups by region, language, and level. Participants were drawn from a range of departments and types of responsibilities. The Environics-DRZ account of the focus group study appears in Appendix A, with further information in appendices G, H, I and J.

- The *literature review* highlights significant developments in the achievement of gender equity in the workplace since *Beneath the Veneer*. This survey examined developments at various levels and within various occupational groups in workplaces in Canada and the United States. It provided a sound starting point for our study and was subsequently expanded as we probed more deeply into issues raised by the focus group study. The expanded review is presented in Appendix B.

The conclusions from the focus group study have a high confidence level. The views expressed in the focus groups were consistent across all groups, with one significant exception. A number of the issues were seen differently depending on whether the participants were women or men. Of note is the fact that the views expressed were consistent regardless of the departments represented among the participants.

The focus group findings provide a "snapshot" of the situation within the federal Public Service and are generally consistent with the findings of the literature review. The Public Service is not alone in its experience with gender equity in the workplace.

The Public Service is not alone in its experience with gender equity in the workplace.

The Consultation Group tested the conclusions and recommendations resulting from its deliberations with a wide range of Public Service employees at various levels. This process strengthened immeasurably the final conclusions and recommendations in this report and our confidence in them.

OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

In preparing this report, the Consultation Group divided its analysis of the focus group study and the literature review into three groups of issues.

The Workplace

We wanted to understand:

- the workplace culture, values, and attitudes;

- the impact of a climate of restraint and uncertainty.

Impact of Workplace Culture and Behaviour

Next, we examined the impact of the workplace culture and behaviour on three factors that are essential for achieving successful employment equity for women:

- women's competence at work;

- top-level management's commitment to employment equity;

- valuing employment equity.

A System Tougher on Women

Against this background, we looked at particular aspects of the workplace that women consistently identify as being tougher on them than on men:

- performance assessment, development, and advancement;

- balancing work and family;

- harassment;

- double challenge:

    — segregation into administrative support;

    — being Aboriginal or in a visible minority, or having a disability;

- working in regional or district offices, in line operations, or in non-traditional occupations.

The Workplace

The fundamental interest of the Consultation Group was to understand the key features of the workplace culture, attitudes, practices, and workstyle patterns as they might affect gender equity, how these were changing, and perceptions about them. To aid our assessment, we divided our analysis into two parts. We first looked at the culture itself and then examined the impact of resource constraint and uncertainty.

Workplace Culture, Values, and Attitudes

Women and men typically share the same goals in joining the Public Service. Most need an income, and the Public Service offers them an opportunity to use their abilities in a satisfying and meaningful way. What, then, are the elements of Public Service employment that lead to a different work experience for women compared to men, particularly if most overt systemic barriers to women have been removed? *Beneath the Veneer* pointed to cultural and attitudinal barriers to women as the explanation.

What... elements of Public Service employment... lead to a different work experience for women compared to men...?

Beneath the Veneer noted that the view of the workplace differed in fundamental ways, depending on gender. Women and men often seemed tuned to different frequencies. Women generally felt disadvantaged in a number of ways compared to men. Yet most men seemed unaware and unconcerned about women's preoccupation with the difficulties they faced.

The review of the literature revealed how cultural factors socialize and condition attitudes and behaviours in the workplace. (All references in the text to books, articles, reports, or other findings arise from the literature review for this report. Rather than cite each reference, we refer the reader to the complete report of the literature review in Appendix B of this Report.) For the most part, these behaviours and attitudes are learned at a very early age and are strongly influenced by gender and other cultural conditioning well before an individual arrives in the workplace. These factors can be powerful in shaping each

person's view of the world and can blind one to the reality being experienced by others.

Socialization can affect patterns of behaviour and strategies for reaching goals. The literature suggests, for example, that in North America women have generally been encouraged from an early age to be helpful, considerate, and modest, and to attain their goals through consensus-building and power-sharing within a long-term context that values relationships. In contrast, men have generally been encouraged to be independent, competitive, action-oriented, and concerned with achieving power and control as a basis for achieving their goals.

...women have... been encouraged... to be helpful, considerate, and modest, and to attain their goals through consensus-building and power-sharing...

The literature emphasizes that cultural conditioning is not "destiny" and does not need to be limiting. Individual behaviour and values can change and individuals do learn to appreciate the advantages of "differences." Outdated attitudes that negatively affect women and inhibit Public Service renewal can be changed. Effective leadership can create an environment conducive to such change.

...cultural conditioning is not "destiny"...

Canadian society recognizes the equality of individuals, regardless of gender, in many situations. The literature review shows, however, that in many large North American workplaces, the dominant norms are still those of a traditional male-dominated culture, reflecting the societal values of an earlier era when many of those workplaces were first established. (For a discussion of traditional male-dominated culture, see Appendix C.) This traditional culture tends to rely on formal, hierarchical structures, centralized command and control, and an impersonal approach. To function effectively in this environment often requires networks and allegiances. Traditionally, this culture did not value the contribution of women, nor provide women with equal access to career opportunities.

Many women and men working in traditional organizations recognize how these practices diminish their organization's effectiveness in today's environment. They are initiating more up-to-date and effective practices in their organizations, practices that are people- and client-centred and focus on flexibility and teamwork, that value differences and depend on the talents of all employees, regardless of gender. Under pressure to survive the current challenges they face, some organizations are making these changes more rapidly than others and are learning that gender equity is "good business."

...gender equity is "good business."

Some suggest that attaining employment equity for women is a "pipeline problem," that it will be solved with time and balanced recruitment. But achieving cultural and attitudinal change is recognized as taking "more than the numbers." An equal number of females and males joining a larger group of males is not sufficient to change a traditional culture to one of gender equity.

The literature describes how some women might experience a traditional male-dominated workplace culture. For example, a woman who tries to establish openness and connection as a basis for a collaborative work effort might be perceived instead as intrusive by workplace norms and could be treated as presumptuous. This could lead to the woman's discouragement, a sense of isolation, and possibly, could escalate to further misunderstandings resulting from communication difficulties. Another communication problem is the frustration of women who feel they are not being "heard." This can occur in several ways: in meetings where sometimes women's voices are ignored; by women being excluded from meetings, both formal and informal; or, by women not being acknowledged or credited for ideas they voice.

The literature also relates how women at work often face a double standard. Not only must a woman meet the organization's regular performance norms, she must often simultaneously meet more "traditional" standards for women, such as subservience, deference, non-aggression, or other stereotypical behaviour. These expectations create a "double bind" for women and make it very difficult to be effective and accepted on the job. Women who ignore, or who are unable to meet, these conflicting expectations may find their careers inexplicably derailed.

...women at work often face a double standard.

The focus group study found that, in general, the Public Service workplace culture continues to conform to the norms of a traditional male-dominated culture. Many of the participants in the focus groups found the Public Service to be hierarchical, centralized, and tougher on women than on men. Although some participants recognized that there are women and men whose workstyles reflect more contemporary values, such as true gender equality, this behaviour was not seen as the organizational norm. Participants in the focus groups said they would advise new entrants to understand their workplace culture, to network, and "play the game" along traditional lines. Such advice further indicates the pressure to conform, notably for those at junior levels who are ambitious.

...the Public Service workplace... conform[s] to the norms of a traditional male-dominated culture... hierarchical, centralized, and tougher on women than on men.

When explicitly asked about gender differences in workplace performance and skills, most women and men reported no differences. However, some women suggested that women's organizational skills were stronger, reflecting the additional demands they had to manage both in their workplace and personal lives. A few women went further, mentioning women's capacity to adopt workstyles that are more participative, collaborative, and consensus-building.

...women [and men] recognized the importance of "playing the game" in their workplace culture.

We were particularly struck by the fact that, in many ways, the women in the focus group study seemed as unaware as their male counterparts that the root cause of the barriers women face in the workplace is probably traditional cultural norms. The problems women described usually focused on symptoms (e.g., work and family balance, old-boys' networks, harassment) rather than root causes (e.g., a traditional male-dominated workplace culture). Moreover, the women seemed to accept these barriers as facts of life that they were powerless to change. As with the men, these women recognized the importance of "playing the game" in their workplace culture. (These situations are examined more specifically in the following pages.)

The literature review also points out that women, more so than men, are handicapped by a traditional workplace culture. This applies whether or not a woman or a man holds traditional views. This is because of the operation of the "double standard" for women.

The literature review provided considerable insight into this phenomenon of the lack of awareness of the barriers to women in a traditional workplace. It documented how many women learn to cope with discrimination in the workplace by "denial of personal discrimination," often despite significant evidence to the contrary. This phenomenon has not prevented these same women from fighting for the rights of women in general. By defining reality in their terms, these women are creating a new reality for themselves, and, because of their presence, it is a reality that inevitably requires some accommodation in the workplace.

In certain areas of the focus group testing, women's and men's perceptions about the workplace differed markedly. The women expressed great dissatisfaction in those areas that posed serious problems for women: performance assessment, selection for development and advancement; balancing work and family; and an environment that is tougher on women than on men. Senior-level women felt powerless to remedy these problems. Generally, senior-level men did not see these issues as their problem, nor as management issues, and they were unaware of women's concerns. These differences will be explored more fully in the following sections.

...women... [were dissatisfied with:] performance assessment, selection for development and advancement; balancing work and family; and an environment that is tougher on women than on men.

Generally, senior-level men were unaware of women's concerns.

The Consultation Group observes that new values and new workstyles increasingly will clash with traditional workplace norms unless there is a clear vision and concerted effort to bring about these changes constructively. Given the recognized importance of Public Service renewal and of developing an organization that is effective, equitable, and functions well, workplace norms must change to be more welcoming to diversity and modern workstyles. Since people at the top levels of an organization play a critical role in bringing about cultural change, they must point the way. Progress on gender equity in the workplace will be an important indicator that the traditional culture is being transformed to that of a modern well-performing workplace.

...workplace norms must change to be more welcoming to diversity and modern workstyles.

Impact of a Climate of Restraint and Uncertainty

The Consultation Group wanted to assess the impact of the climate of resource constraint, downsizing, and other uncertainties on Public Service culture and attitudes since the release of *Beneath the Veneer*.

The focus group study showed that the participants were strongly influenced by the pressure and uncertainties of their workplace environments. Everyone was preoccupied with personal "survival" and job retention. Opportunities for promotion were perceived as no longer available.

...focus group... participants were strongly influenced by the pressure and uncertainties of their workplace environments.

All focus group participants reported strong pressure at work to do more with less and to show immediate results. They saw little scope for professional development either for themselves or for their staffs. They felt overworked and undervalued and reported that more and more they were shortchanging both their work and their personal responsibilities. Their work environment was increasingly competitive, unfriendly, and stressful.

The trends inherent in this environment of ever-growing demands will make progress on gender equity even more challenging. With the prospect of continued resource constraint, it will be even more important for managers to realize the potential of every individual employee, regardless of gender. If this does not happen, the pressures will only worsen.

Participants in the focus groups reported that, as managers, they were under increasing pressure to concentrate on short-term, immediate results, to maintain control and avoid risk, and to retain or recruit only those employees who were job-ready, regardless of potential. As a result, informal networks are increasingly important. Without conscious, strategically targeted measures, this situation will limit management's ability to bring about the cultural change needed to foster employment equity, and to realize Public Service renewal.

As the Consultation Group found in our 1993 work, *Case Studies on Best Practices in the Employment of Women*, gender equity makes "good business sense." Using the talents of all employees, regardless of gender, makes particular sense for an organization under pressure to improve its performance in the atmosphere of restraint and downsizing. The experience of organizations that perform well shows, too, that building diversity into key project teams generally leads to better ideas, better performance, and better results.

Using the talents of all employees. regardless of gender, makes... sense... in the atmosphere of restraint...

Impact of Workplace Culture and Behaviour

There are three factors that the Consultation Group considers as critical ingredients to achieve successful employment equity for women. These are: women's competence in doing the job, the commitment of top management to employment equity, and a high organizational value attached to having employment equity.

The Consultation Group's examination of the Public Service workplace culture provided insight into the subtle and sometimes unexpected impact that a traditional workplace culture — particularly in a climate of cutbacks and uncertainty — can have in inhibiting progress towards workplace equity. Therefore, our next step was to examine more closely the effect that such a culture could have in undermining the contribution to gender equity that otherwise might have been expected.

Women's Competence at Work

In a workplace environment without gender bias, women's advancement would be linked to their relative competence on the job and their perceived potential to take on greater responsibilities. Therefore, the Consultation Group wanted to look at the experience and perceptions of women's competence on the job and to distinguish any differences from men's experiences.

Nothing in the literature suggests that women are less competent than men in performing in the workplace under similar circumstances, given similar abilities and effort.

Recent studies show that women who reach senior levels in the Public Service are self-assured and know they can perform well. Although their competence is acknowledged and they were promoted to senior levels, the women in these studies recognize that attitudinal barriers to women continue. They believe they have to work harder, meet tougher standards, and bear a greater personal cost than most of their male colleagues to move ahead in their careers.

...women [at senior levels in the Public Service]... believe they have to work harder, meet tougher standards, and bear a greater personal cost than most of their male colleagues to move ahead in their careers.

The literature notes another phenomenon women experience. Women, particularly those entering traditionally male-dominated fields, including line management and executive positions, often have difficulty accessing jobs before demonstrating their "proven" competence to do the job. In contrast, a male candidate, whether from within the organization or not, is often offered a position based on recognition of his potential competence.

Some of these studies indicate that a significant number of senior-level women in the Public Service are seriously exploring leaving the Public Service. While there is nothing to suggest that men are not equally serious about investigating opportunities outside the Public Service, studies suggest that such a finding among senior-level women usually indicates that women do not feel they have chances to use their abilities.

The literature also highlights the importance of building a "critical mass" of women who are well integrated into under-represented areas, and sufficient in number to have a positive impact on workplace attitudes towards gender equity.

This approach avoids loading all the risk for performing well on one or two women who may be disadvantaged because of the difficulties of functioning effectively in a culture that is often unwelcoming.

Virtually all the focus group participants had worked with senior-level women. They generally agreed these women were competent and effective in their jobs. Only a few men who had not worked with senior-level women expressed any stereotypical reservations about the potential competence of women in executive positions.

...senior-level women... were competent and effective in their jobs... Paradoxically, there was a... perception... that employment equity policies have resulted in appointments of some senior-level women in the Public Service that were not based on competence.

Paradoxically, there was a widely voiced perception among the focus group participants that employment equity policies have resulted in appointments of some senior-level women in the Public Service that were not based on competence. At the same time, female participants strongly resented any implication that their career advancement was linked in any way to employment equity measures and not to competence. Male participants noted that the senior-level women they knew stressed their personal competence and pointedly disassociated their career success from employment equity policies.

Participants also stressed the positive impact on gender equity of competent women holding visible senior positions, especially in line management positions, whether as directors-general or as deputy ministers. This demonstrated to everyone the competence of women in line positions and, at the same time, provided important role models and inspiration for junior-level women.

[The men] did not see... gender imbalance[s] as their problem, nor even as their responsibility as senior executives.

Some of the male participants seemed mystified as to why there were so few women in non-traditional senior line management positions. In their school years they were accustomed to sharing classes with competent young women on a "level playing field." Now, the women they encountered in the workplace were mainly in secretarial and clerical positions. These men believed this imbalance was changing and would be different for their daughters. But they were at a loss to explain how this would happen and offered few concrete ideas. They did not see this gender imbalance as their problem, nor even as their responsibility as senior executives.

The inconsistency between the focus group participants' personal experiences of the competence of senior-level women, compared to their perceptions that women may be promoted for reasons other than competence, is troubling. At a time of stress and uncertainty, when pressures for personal "survival"

are intense, this dichotomy could signal an emerging backlash against women who advance in the workplace. The fact that these perceptions continue in the face of reality experienced to the contrary suggests that such perceptions are rooted in the workplace culture and underlying attitudes. If present pressures intensify, there is a serious risk that if such a backlash materializes, women's careers will suffer disproportionately compared to those of their male colleagues.

The Consultation Group subscribes to the importance of establishing a well-integrated, critical mass of competent women in under-represented areas of the Public Service (recognized as a best practice for furthering gender equity), including the Executive group. The Public Service should be an attractive option for competent women, particularly for those now in under-represented groups. It is essential to understand why senior-level women are considering leaving and whether action is needed to remedy this situation.

Recognizing the abilities and competence of women is part of making the Public Service environment a welcoming workplace for everyone. The Consultation Group was concerned that senior-level men in the focus group study did not see that they had a responsibility as executives to change the present imbalance in the workplace that limits the possibilities for women.

... see they had a responsibility as executives to change the present...

Top-Level Management's Commitment to Employment Equity

The Consultation Group had two interests in this area. First, we wanted to consider the best practices — the most effective ways in which top-level management could contribute to achieving employment equity. And secondly, we wanted to examine the present situation in the Public Service — how top-level management is going about achieving employment equity and the resulting degrees of success.

Current management literature confirms that culture-setting in the workplace occurs not only through performance incentives, but also through top-level managers themselves clearly demonstrating what they value, by the general tone they establish, and, most importantly, how they convey to staff that culture and attitudinal change must occur.

Research results on organizations that have moved most vigorously and most successfully towards gender equity are unequivocal. The attitudes and actions of the top-level managers were critical to success in every instance. First, these managers themselves had to realize the necessity of changing their organizations, either because change was imposed on them externally (e.g., as a condition of continuing to supply governments) or through their own experiences.

...attitudes and actions of the top-level managers... [are] critical to success...

Participants in the focus groups agreed that senior management sets the standards and culture for the Public Service. The participants strongly agreed that the actions of central agencies and top-level management in the Public Service did not match their stated objectives of promoting gender equity. They did not "walk the talk."

...central agencies and top-level management in the Public Service did not... "walk the talk" [on promoting gender equity]

The difference between the views of the senior-level female participants and their male counterparts on the culture and their workplace environment is striking. The men were unaware that women might feel excluded by men from crucial opportunities for network-building and for work-related advice and development. Nor were the men aware that women found working relations with their male colleagues to be non-existent or "civil at best." Although they were senior managers and executives, these men did not see gender equity as their concern. Furthermore, they did not consider their own lack of personal action in this area to have serious implications for their organization or to bear on any assessment of their executive capabilities.

...men [were not] aware that women found working relations with their male colleagues to be non-existent or "civil at best."

Gender equity cannot be achieved by delegation alone. Studies on best management practices show that effective senior-level interventions are essential and can range from monitoring the gender balance of new task forces and selection lists for staffing actions, to mentoring women with high potential, to drop-in visits at worksites to discuss progress on gender equity with local managers, supervisors, and employees.

From the focus groups, it appears that Public Service senior executives are not personally intervening to promote gender equity. Departmental managers at all levels must be aware of the importance of their leadership roles in achieving results and should be expected to be accountable, not only for the gender equity objectives they set, but also for their own personal interventions that make gender equity happen.

The traditional behaviour reflected by the executives in the focus groups underlines the importance of carefully identifying and selecting executives, managers, and supervisors whose progressive attitudes and practices embody the principles of Public Service renewal. It also points to the need to ensure that effective training and development is available to executives to increase their awareness of their role in fostering gender equity.

Valuing Employment Equity

The Consultation Group wanted to assess the extent to which gender equity was valued for its own sake and the extent to which Public Service employment equity policies were understood and perceived as fair.

The literature review indicates that, in the American experience, affirmative action programs for women and other minorities in the workplace are not always well understood. One result attributed to this lack of understanding is a backlash directed at women, most evident at lower and middle management levels.

A key finding from the focus group study is the widespread misunderstanding of Public Service employment equity policies among both female and male participants. The views of these policies were almost universally negative. But, in fact, many of these negative views arise from confusion about and misunderstanding of the policies.

[There is]... widespread misunderstanding of Public Service employment equity policies...

The Public Service has never had "quotas" under its employment equity policies. Yet, the focus group participants associated employment equity for women mainly with quotas that set the number of women who must be hired, particularly at senior levels and in non-traditional areas. The perception was that women were being appointed to positions for which they were not qualified, and, at senior levels, jobs were being created and tailored for women.

The Public Service has never had "quotas"... yet... there was confusion... between "quotas" and "targets."

Such a policy was regarded by both the women and men as a "numbers game" and insulting to women. The men saw the (non-existent) policy as unfair to them, requiring them to sacrifice their advancement for that of women. They did not appear to direct this frustration at women, however, but rather, at the system.

Under present employment equity policies, departments are expected to set "targets" as indicators against which progress can be judged according to their own goals. There was confusion among the participants between "quotas" and "targets." Both terms were used interchangeably and in conjunction with the term "employment equity policy," usually with the negative connotation of externally imposed quotas.

The misunderstanding of employment equity policies likely reflects a variety of factors, ranging from not understanding the differences between "quotas" and "targets," to more fundamental concerns. To meet their employment equity goals, well-intentioned managers may be using practical strategies that create misleading impressions. Or, perhaps, this policy area serves as a convenient and accepted scapegoat for some Public Service employees to vent their frustrations with their career progress in the present climate.

Under the pressures of the present workplace climate, the staffing of temporary project teams to address issues of crucial importance to an organization offers an excellent opportunity to show the value the organization attaches to diversity in contributing to effective problem-solving. In the longer run, this approach can generate meaningful improvements in employment equity through the development, testing, and full employment of all staff.

[There was a]... lack of evidence that gender equity was appreciated... as a core Public Service value...

Of greater concern to the Consultation Group was the lack of evidence that gender equity was appreciated either as a core Public Service value on grounds of fairness and merit, or as a means of producing a fair and decent workplace that uses resources more effectively. The message that employment equity is "more than the numbers," that it is a matter of basic human rights and essential to a top quality Public Service, should be broadly conveyed.

The foremost requirement is to increase every manager's understanding of the value of gender equity and of the inequity to women of treating them less favourably than men.

The foremost requirement is to increase every manager's understanding of the value of gender equity and of the inequity to women of treating them less favourably than men. This transformation will require top-level leadership, a constructive dialogue throughout each department, diversity training, and information about best practices for attaining employment equity.

Allowing the present lack of understanding about employment equity to continue to permeate the workplace could generate the worst of both worlds. There is a risk of backlash and no meaningful progress on gender equity. This would be deeply inequitable to women and would be inconsistent with both the

merit principle and the goal of a top quality Public Service.
Every Public Service employee must understand the difference
that each person can make in creating a fair workplace
environment for her or his colleagues, and be encouraged
to do so.

A System Tougher on Women

Many women in the Public Service consistently identify
certain aspects of the workplace as being tougher on them
than on men, even though the problems women describe in
these areas are also experienced by some men. Therefore, we
were interested in understanding better whether the difficulties
women experience are symptomatic of a deeper-rooted
problem that might explain why women are more likely than
men to point to these areas as difficult for them.

The Consultation Group's findings that the Public
Service culture and attitudes largely reflect traditional
(male-dominated) norms and values led us to look at how these
attitudes undervalue women; cause perceptions that women's
advancement is not linked to their competence, despite actual
evidence to the contrary; and negatively affect organizational
and top-level commitment to employment equity. The
Consultation Group wanted to assess how the cumulative
effect of these factors might contribute to many women
experiencing a tougher workplace than their male colleagues.

Performance Assessment,
Development, and Advancement

A good indicator of an organization's culture and values arises
from its formal and informal human resource management
practices for evaluating employee performance and selecting
individuals for development and advancement. In the Public
Service, women frequently cite the disadvantages they face in
this area. The Consultation Group wanted to better
understand the problems women in the Public Service were
experiencing in areas of performance assessment and in being
selected for advancement and to be aware of particular
developmental needs women might have.

One of the most difficult barriers women encounter in traditional North American workplaces is a widely occurring phenomenon documented in the literature — "old-boys'" networks. These networks can be major impediments for women in being identified and selected for development and advancement. These "invisible," powerful, but informal mechanisms are usually rooted in the traditions of the historically dominant group in the organization and are the means for the powerful "old guard" to pass on its cultural values and "insider" knowledge to selected new entrants. These new entrants are competent, well-connected, and display a willingness to conform to these values. In return, they are informally groomed for key developmental assignments and responsibilities. The members of old-boys' networks are almost exclusively men, although a woman who plays the game well may be accepted after a long process of informal "testing" for conformity to norms. Such networks are typically resistant to change: the behaviour of members in the trusted "inner circle" is reassuringly predictable, a considerable benefit for fellow members in an uncertain and high-risk environment. Some men who are excluded from such networks experience the same frustrations as women. Exclusion is typically hardest on those employees who are ambitious and want to advance.

The literature documents how women's entry into the workplace has been resisted or channelled into areas of least organizational value or status. *Beneath the Veneer* outlined patterns of "concentration" in the Public Service where women tend to be found in a limited number of occupational areas ("pink ghettos"), and of "compression," where women are relatively more represented at the lower levels of occupational groups.

The literature also notes how the problem of being channelled into certain occupational streams is compounded for women in administrative support positions. Women in these positions in traditional hierarchical environments are often trapped by impersonal and limiting jobs. They may be isolated from meaningful development and advancement opportunities, and hence mainstream career paths, by virtue of their segregation into largely stereotypical "female" roles or into essentially female-only work units. The situation of advancing technology, which is changing or eliminating these jobs in large numbers, compounds the difficulty women in these positions face in advancing their careers.

..."Old-boys'" networks... can be major impediments for women in being identified and selected for development and advancement.

...the problem of being channelled into certain occupational streams is compounded for women in adminis- trative support ...[by] advancing technology, which is... eliminating these jobs...

The pattern of segregation continues. In 1995, women still dominate the administrative support categories, and are disproportionately compressed in the lower levels of virtually every occupational group. At executive levels, the impression is that women are found mainly in staff functions, such as human resources or communications, or in less secure positions with special projects. Resistance to women's entry into non-traditional and mainstream line management positions continues.

...women are disproportionately compressed in the lower levels of virtually every occupational group. At executive levels women are found mainly in staff functions...

The literature on human resource development stresses the importance of employees having a track record in staff, central, and line operations for successful preparation for the executive level. Yet women inevitably face greater difficulty than men in obtaining access to the line experience they need. The literature also notes that women who make it into powerful executive positions in traditional organizations have "political savvy" about the dynamics of their organizations. They have acquired this knowledge through sensitive on-the-job assignments, long continuity in their organizations, and the opportunity to continuously associate closely with experienced and respected insiders.

...women who make it into powerful executive positions in traditional organizations have "political savvy"... acquired... through sensitive assignments, long continuity,... and [by associating] with experienced and respected insiders.

The literature documents the invisible attitudinal barrier in the traditional workplace whereby women's on-the-job performance is often judged by both narrower and higher standards than those applied to men. Under this double standard, women are often expected to conform to norms that are traditional for women (e.g., unassertiveness, deference), even where this behaviour would make effectiveness in their jobs impossible. Moreover, women who fail in the workplace are often judged more harshly than men, even though they may have faced obstacles that a male counterpart would not have encountered.

...women's on-the-job performance is often judged by both narrower and higher standards than those applied to men.

Greater attention must be given to ensuring that women with management and executive potential have access to the necessary mix of formal developmental programs and on-the-job experience, particularly in line operations. Gaps in their backgrounds can be addressed through well-designed developmental training, assignments, and mentoring arrangements. Women who work in occupations where there is not a critical mass of women require "survival skills" and support networks, as well as mentoring and coaching.

Mentoring programs play a dual role in breaking down "old-boys'" network barriers. Not only do these programs strengthen the skills of competent, promising women, but the mentors, usually male managers and executives, also report

For new entrants,... the importance of networks, mentors, ...continued education,... [and] "playing the game" [was stressed].

being impressed with the competence displayed by the women whom they mentor.

For new entrants to the Public Service, focus group participants stressed the importance of networks, mentors, and continued education, as well as "playing the game."

In discussing barriers women experience in being selected for development and advancement, the sharpest and most strongly expressed differences came from those focus groups with women participants compared to those with men. Women described old-boys' networks as a major impediment, whereas some men did not believe such networks to be a factor for women.

On the other hand, the men acknowledged that these networks existed, and some recognized that women were consciously excluded. Men viewed networks as primarily social, rather than work-based. In contrast, the women detailed the dynamics of old-boys' networks in their respective environments and their perceptions of the advantages these networks gave their male colleagues.

Women described old-boys' networks as a major impediment, whereas some men did not believe such networks to be a factor for women. ...women felt they were excluded from... [old-boys'] networks solely because they were women.

As well as experiencing social isolation in the workplace, women reported that they found their exclusion to be both humiliating and costly in terms of their own career progress. They felt they had suffered especially from being excluded from informal mentoring. These women cited the lengths they were forced to go to in compensating for the disadvantages they experienced, often at the risk of appearing unacceptably aggressive and ambitious. These women felt they were excluded from these networks solely because they were women. They believed they missed important opportunities for knowledge-building, demonstrating their competence, and building working relationships based on personal trust.

...women believed that what was needed were... formal mentoring and developmental programs for women.

Neither female nor male participants in the focus group study expected these networks to change in the foreseeable future, nor did the male participants see any need to change them for women's sake. The women felt powerless to change the system, and clearly understood that their interests lay in continuing to try to conform. They believed career success for them hinged on their willingness to play the game by the rules of the traditional culture they saw reflected in the top levels of their organizations. Within this environment, women believed that what was needed were organizationally established mechanisms of formal mentoring and developmental programs for women.

Both female and male participants in the focus group study recognized that tougher standards apply to women. Men acknowledged being tougher on women in appraisals than on men. The focus group discussions showed, too, that the credibility of female executives was measured by a wider array of factors than for men.

The focus group discussions also suggested that a paternalistic or domineering attitude was sometimes displayed by senior-level men towards women. Some participants pointed out what they perceived as paternalistic efforts to shelter women from workplace realities. The participants also discussed the practice of "cherry-picking," whereby senior-level men select women perceived as promising but who also meet the traditional standards expected of women, and then actively and openly support them with promotions and moves from department to department. Several participants saw this practice as unfair to both women and men and an expression of a paternalistic approach to employment equity.

The focus group participants acknowledged that, under pressure to produce immediate results in the current resource-constrained environment, managers were foregoing formal staff development. Instead, they were resorting to informal strategies to identify staff who were job-ready, relying on suggestions from trusted colleagues, and using acting assignments to ready those so identified for formal competitions. Participants agreed that, once under way, the competitive process was reasonably fair, but that the overall outcome was only as good as the informal selection process.

These findings from the focus groups directly contradict another perception the focus group participants expressed — that employment equity policies have created a system that is soft on women. Both women and men indicated that, in practice, the system is harder on women than men. These findings reinforce the importance of having formal selection processes for developmental and advancement opportunities that are practical and fair for both women and men.

The Consultation Group is particularly concerned about the focus group findings of the very different perceptions held by the women, compared to the men, that the old-boys' system is a major impediment to women.

The fact that some managers tend to use informal selection processes — notably, the old-boys' network — over the formal system signals that the formal system is inadequate. Selection processes must be fair for everyone and the informal processes can be especially disadvantageous to women. It is evident that the selection processes for development and advancement require improvement so that they are fair, equitable, and effective for all.

...the selection processes for development and advancement require improvement so that they are fair, equitable, and effective for all.

As organizational renewal proceeds, greater use will be made of flexible approaches such as task forces and project teams. Ensuring better gender balance on these teams will be a cost-effective way of providing women with excellent employment and developmental opportunities that strengthen their understanding of the dynamics of their organization.

The Consultation Group stresses the importance of building a "critical mass" of women in non-traditional areas, adequate in size to create a healthy workplace environment. Care is needed to ensure that these women are also well integrated into the workplace and not grouped in a way that results in their isolation from the mainstream. This approach would enable competent women to draw confidence and support from all their colleagues, whether women or men, and to demonstrate their competence without being undermined by the additional obstacles a lone woman can experience.

[It is important to build] a "critical mass" of women in non-traditional areas, adequate in size to create a healthy workplace environment.

Departments, through their deputy ministers, are accountable for the quality of their internal staffing and development processes throughout their respective organizations. The practice of judging women's workplace performance more harshly than men's is clearly a problem that senior managers must address with the full support of deputy ministers. Deputy ministers should be confident that their female employees are recognized fairly for their performance.

Deputy ministers should be confident that their female employees are recognized fairly for their performance.

Some departments have made progress with human resource planning and have good processes for staffing and development. Nevertheless, each department should ensure that specific human resource strategies aimed at optimally developing and deploying the talents of all staff are in place and monitored.

...each department should ensure that specific human resource strategies... [for] developing and deploying the talents of all staff are in place and monitored.

Additionally, departments should give particular attention to the development of administrative support staff (mainly women). At the same time, special efforts are needed to identify women for positions in non-traditional occupations. Long-term planning is necessary to ensure that women with executive potential are given the range of on-the-job

experience expected of future executives. This should include significant line management experience and coaching from respected senior-level executives.

Balancing Work and Family

Given continuing concerns expressed by women about the heavy pressures they face in balancing work and family, the Consultation Group wanted to ascertain the extent to which the effects of these pressures might impede women's advancement, and to compare their situation with that of their male colleagues.

The literature reflects new developments in assessing the type of employee who is most effective in the modern workplace, particularly at different levels of responsibility. Although there is insufficient evidence to be conclusive, findings to date point to the importance of having employees at all levels who have a healthy balance between their workplace and personal lives, and who can bring a common sense perspective to carrying out their workplace responsibilities. As the literature indicates, assessing the degree to which Public Service employees achieve balance has become an area of increasing interest.

[It is important to have]... employees at all levels who have a healthy balance between their workplace and personal lives...

The literature review provides insights about the stress employees are feeling at all levels in large organizations during this era of downsizing, technological change, and restructuring. Studies show that women in the workplace who have spouses and children experience significantly greater stress than their male counterparts. This is due, in part, to the relatively greater share of family responsibilities that women typically bear. Women in non-traditional occupations, particularly at senior levels, must also cope with stress from the social isolation and other difficulties arising from the attitudes they encounter as women in the workplace.

...women in the workplace who have spouses and children experience significantly greater stress than their male counterparts. This is due, in part, to... [women's] relatively greater share of family responsibilities...

Studies report that, in general, women tend to have better coping strategies than men, in part because of their socialization. Women often develop better support systems outside the workplace, as well as other outlets for releasing stress. Compared to women who do not work outside the home, and to men generally, women in the workplace tend to manage stress better. This is generally attributed to the constant challenge women face in balancing the demands of work and family responsibilities.

Compared... to men,... women in the workplace tend to manage stress better.

The literature reports that some organizations have introduced new measures to help employees balance work and family responsibilities better. These include a wide array of work-at-home arrangements, job-sharing, part-time and flex-time arrangements (built around core hours for common meeting times) developed together with employees and their representatives. Another successful strategy is the implementation of "employer-organized/employee pays" services, either on- or off-site. These range from child care or elder care services to "carry home" dinner plans offered through on-site cafeterias. However, the most significant factor is a flexible management attitude, with pilot projects and continuous experimentation tailored to individual situations. This approach has proven to increase productivity, as well as the probability of retaining valued employees.

[Many participants reported that] maintaining family life and family responsibilities, while responding to the demands of a high-pressure work environment... was increasingly difficult.

All the focus group participants reported that their work environment was becoming increasingly stressful as it became more demanding and competitive under the pressures of resource constraint. In many cases, long hours and long work weeks were becoming the norm, particularly for those at more senior levels. Maintaining family life and family responsibilities, while responding to the demands of a high-pressure work environment and a shrinking income, was increasingly difficult. Those at the top levels were not seen to be truly sensitive to the reality these senior managers experienced.

These men, who were senior managers, did not see the problem [of balancing work and family] as a management issue.

While male participants recognized the difficulties of balancing work and family, and indeed, complained about the work pressures that kept them from establishing a balance in their own lives, they did not feel they had a responsibility to resolve this problem. Instead, they described it as a women's issue, implying that not only was this a women's problem, but also that it was women's responsibility to find a solution, whether in the workplace or in the home. These men, who were senior managers, did not see the problem as a management issue.

Female participants, whether married or single, acknowledged that they inevitably bore the personal challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities more so than men. However, some did flag changes they were seeing in the next generation: both genders appear to be giving greater priority to maintaining a better balance between work and family responsibilities. The women suggested that even small workplace changes could lessen their strain. For example, they suggested holding regular meetings during core hours and thus avoiding conflict with typical child care schedules.

The women in the focus groups said that, without full management support, they generally felt unable to bring about necessary change to workplace practices. They believed that personal initiatives on their part, as women, would be "suicidal" to their careers and they would be penalized if they presented a "human side" at work. They felt that acknowledging family responsibilities would incorrectly be perceived as choosing a "parent" track rather than a "career" track.

...women... felt that acknowledging family responsibilities would incorrectly be perceived as choosing a "parent" track rather than a "career" track.

The Consultation Group believes that balancing work and family is not a "women's issue." It is a human resource management issue that should concern managers because of the possible negative effects on employees' productivity, their long-term effectiveness, and on their retention. (The Consultation Group is increasingly aware that some senior Public Service managers, both women and men, have joined the private sector with attractive family benefit packages tailored to their circumstances.)

...balancing work and family is... a human resource management issue.

The Consultation Group is concerned about continuing organizational practices that appear to be based on the assumption that an employee is either single with no family responsibilities, or else is married to a stay-at-home spouse. Departments should examine all workplace practices, including long-standing career path expectations and employee benefits, and replace those favouring this traditional model with more flexible arrangements that can be adapted to the various needs of today's employees, whether single or not, to better balance their work and personal lives.

The Consultation Group also believes that a balance between work and family life is essential to the future health of the Public Service. Management must set the tone, ensuring that reasonable family and personal needs are respected within resource constraints and essential operational requirements. Greater experimentation based on best practices of other organizations, personally monitored by the highest management levels, can lead to the development of new workstyles and employer-organized support services that will achieve a better balance to the benefit of the organization's overall effectiveness.

It is evident that more research is needed to build on existing studies of best work/family balance practices and the link between such practices and the productivity, health, and effectiveness of public sector organizations and their employees at all levels.

Harassment

With greater uncertainty about job security, harassment may become a growing problem in the workplace. (For the Consultation Group's definition of harassment, see Appendix C.) Harassment must be an area of increasing management concern regardless of whether the harassment is sexual, gender-based, or simply an abuse of power. The information available suggests women may be victimized by harassment in ways not experienced by men. To some extent, this fact is attributable to double standards and outdated attitudes towards women and can be partly explained by women's lesser status in a traditional male-dominated workplace. This situation is complicated by changing social attitudes about respectable behaviour. Whether a woman is the boss or a secretary, she may be regarded by some as a "fair target" for harassment if she does not conform to individual or organizational norms of acceptable behaviour for women (e.g., because she is working in a non-traditional area). Moreover, compared to men, the personal and career price to a woman of formally launching a complaint, particularly in the area of sexual harassment, or of unilaterally trying to change organizational norms, may be so high that she will direct her energies instead to finding another job, or to simply surviving.

Harassment must be an area of increasing... concern regardless of whether the harass- ment is sexual, gender-based, or simply an abuse of power.

...women may be victimized by harassment in ways not experienced by men.

Equally difficult can be the efforts of well-intentioned men who want to avoid any perception or suggestion of instigating sexual harassment. They may be only too well aware of the ordeal of a formal complaint. These men may exclude women from business trips or avoid meeting them alone or even having lunch with them. The result for women is workplace isolation that can lead to difficulty in being effective on the job.

Against this background, the focus group study provides significant insight into the extent and nature of certain types of harassment in the Public Service workplace. The Public Service, like virtually all organizations, has not escaped the fact of harassment and the patterns found there are consistent with reports in the literature about other organizations.

In the focus groups, neither women nor men raised the issue of harassment of men, or of women being the harassers (despite the Public Service Commission's appeals experience, mainly involving abuses of power). The discussions centred on harassment of women by men. Many of the participants, both women and men, had witnessed overt harassment by senior-level men of women in administrative support positions. This harassment was usually of a sexual or gender-linked nature, but sometimes it was simply an abuse of power.

The senior-level female participants reported that the harassment they experienced was usually more subtle and virtually impossible to prove. It was essentially gender-linked and reflected abuses of power. It ranged from excluding them from meetings and withholding important information to unfair appraisals and treatment that undermined the women's credibility and authority.

The Consultation Group considers work-related harassment to be a complex issue that is widely misunderstood by everyone, despite the efforts of some departments to educate their managers. Public Service policies and practices on harassment were found to be unclear and seriously in need of reform. Their effectiveness has been mixed, and even counterproductive, and their continued sustainability would be unlikely in a workplace environment that is increasingly competitive and under pressure to "do more with less." New approaches are needed that address the root problems.

...work-related harassment... [is] a complex issue that is widely misunderstood...

Management needs to be particularly aware of the unique harassment problems that women can experience as compared to men, and to understand the underlying causes. The Consultation Group believes that, in many cases, the particular harassment problems women encounter are fundamentally based on attitudinal and cultural bias. They result in behaviour that is unacceptable and intolerable.

...in many cases, the... harassment problems women encounter are... based on attitudinal and cultural bias.

Whatever the cause, harassment is a subject that is not yet "fully out of the closet." The fact that neither the women nor the men in the focus groups reported taking action to counteract the harassment of women they witnessed, or (among the women) experienced, is indicative of their uncertainty about the real rules of the culture at senior levels (and the potentially career-limiting impact of taking action) compared to official policies.

The issue must be faced squarely. Top-level management must lead in showing that all employees, without qualification, are valued. Top management must personally convey to all staff that disrespect, inappropriate attitudes, and belittling or harassing behaviour are unacceptable.

The new Treasury Board Harassment in the Workplace Policy, released in January 1995, is a welcome first step to handling the complexities of harassment in the workplace. The first phase of the policy consists of changes that are intended to resolve complaints more quickly and in a less adversarial fashion using mediation. In the second phase, the Treasury Board Secretariat will consult departments, the Public Service Commission, the Public Service Staff Relations Board, and bargaining agents on improvements to the means of redress. The Consultation Group supports both the process and the new directions being taken.

The goal of a reformed approach should be to prevent harassment.

The goal of a reformed approach should be to prevent harassment. This should include ensuring that the workplace environment or practices do not contribute to the occurrence of harassment; and, where it does occur, to eliminate the ordeal for victims, to provide more timely and effective remedies, and to minimize the negative impacts of work-related harassment on workplace effectiveness. Suggested principles for a new approach include the following essential elements:

- Recognize that harassment may be not only a manifestation of an individual's unacceptable behaviour, but also a symptom of an unhealthy workplace climate with unacceptable norms of behaviour.

- Establish a preventive approach as a basis for eliminating work-related harassment, whether the harassment reflects unacceptable individual behaviour or equally unacceptable organizational norms.

- Provide special training to equip managers, with the necessary understanding and skills to effectively prevent or handle the harassment situations in their organizations.

- Place greater emphasis on managers using skilled professional services to prevent or deal with work-related harassment, ranging from independent surveys of the organizational climate to neutral third-party mediation and conciliation services when necessary, as well as timely counselling and healing services for both individuals and workplace groups affected by a harassment incident.

- Hold each department accountable through the deputy minister for effectively preventing harassment in the workplace, and where it does occur, for resolving these situations expeditiously and fairly.

A Double Challenge

The "glass ceiling" is a useful metaphor for conveying the impact of some of the "invisible" attitudinal barriers women face in the workplace that impede their advancement. It is evident that there are other attitudinal obstacles that create virtual "glass walls" or "glass boxes" that further impede the effectiveness of particular groups of women in the workplace compared to that of men. The double challenge these women face is explored further in the following sections.

The "glass ceiling"... [conveys] the impact of... "invisible" attitudinal barriers women face in the workplace that impede their advancement.

Women in Administrative Support

In 1993, approximately 70 per cent of all women in the Public Service were concentrated in administrative support positions, compared to only 20 per cent of all men. Correspondingly more than three-quarters of total personnel in administrative support were women, with women disproportionately compressed into the lower levels. For the purposes of this report, "administrative support personnel" includes the secretarial, clerical, and other office support groups, as well as personnel in the various non-supervisory junior administrative-type occupational functions such as administration (up to and including the AS-3 level) and program administration (up to and including the PM-3 level). (For an explanation of the Public Service employment groups and levels, see Appendix C.)

In 1993,... more than three-quarters of total personnel in administrative support were women disproportionately compressed into the lower levels.

As noted earlier, employees in administrative support positions can face a number of disadvantages because these functions may be stereotyped as traditional "female-type" support roles. The disadvantages can include:

- Devaluation and stereotyping associated with "pink ghetto" support roles, and segregation from mainstream paths.

- Little recognition of on-the-job learning. This learning is often ignored, for example, in selecting candidates for other occupational groups although individuals in administrative support positions may have developed

equivalent knowledge or skills to the requirements, stated and otherwise.

- A high likelihood of being subjected to sexual or gender-linked harassment.

- A high probability of their jobs being eliminated or substantially restructured as a result of technological developments, organizational changes, and work restructuring, particularly at the lower levels where women are compressed.

The Public Service is making some progress in addressing the difficulties this group faces. Some departments offer developmental programs that provide opportunities tailored to employees in administrative support positions. But there is often resistance to developing these individuals for non-traditional or more specialized areas, even where they may have developed significant knowledge and experience in the field.

The proposed initiative to convert these generalist occupational groups into a single category (known as the GE-group) is expected to benefit those in administrative support positions. The aim is to provide more organizational flexibility by creating a framework for greater job mobility and advancement within areas requiring similar skills. In its 1992 report, *Gender Balance: More Than the Numbers*, the Consultation Group recommended this "GE conversion" be monitored closely to ensure that the new occupational group not become a new "pink ghetto," with women yet again compressed at the lower rungs. There is a risk that official subgroups will be created for certain male-dominated groups (e.g., financial officers), thereby continuing the present barriers to job mobility.

Due to anticipated skill shortages, future opportunities may exist in various technologist and technician fields that have been traditionally male-dominated. A recent study suggests a two- to four-year lead time is needed to institute the necessary training programs to equip employees in the administrative support group for potential new areas of work.

...women in administrative support positions face unique problems in breaking out of these occupations.

The focus group participants recognized that women in administrative support positions face unique problems in breaking out of these occupations. They also recognized that these positions would be affected by downsizing and by technological and restructuring changes, but it was apparent that the participants had given little thought as to how to

address this situation. Generally, these managers felt more immediate pressures and had little energy or resources to devote to long-term staff development or retraining.

The Consultation Group is particularly concerned about the implications of job restructuring and technological change for personnel in administrative support. Since most women in the Public Service work in administrative support positions, these changes could severely reduce the representation of women in the Public Service unless measures are taken to retrain and redeploy those affected.

Deputy ministers should ensure that their departments have strategies to retrain and redeploy this group. Given the knowledge and commitment of most of these women, the Consultation Group believes they are a valuable resource. Where possible, opportunities for their retraining and redeployment within the Public Service should be pursued. Moreover, given the costs of unemployment insurance and public training to re-employ these individuals, the Consultation Group believes it would be more economical to make reasonable efforts to redeploy these personnel within the Public Service, even where retraining costs may be involved.

Given the knowledge and commitment of... these women... they are a valuable resource... opportunities for their retraining and redeployment within the Public Service should be pursued.

Being Aboriginal or in a Visible Minority, or Having a Disability

The Consultation Group wanted to give specific attention to the situation of women who are also members of other designated employment equity groups (Aboriginal women, women in a visible minority, and women with disabilities). Many of these women have expressed to Consultation Group members their sense of being "doubly-disadvantaged" from their experiences of workplace equity.

Many... women [who are Aboriginal, women in a visible minority, or who have disabilities] have expressed... their sense of being "doubly-disadvantaged"...

The literature review and a 1993 report, *Distortions in the Mirror: Reflections of Visible Minorities in the Public Service of Canada*, of the Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Visible Minorities document the double-jeopardy women of visible minorities experience. For example, as for women generally, women in a visible minority tend to be compressed into the lower levels of each occupational group, proportionately more than occurs for men in a visible minority. Thus, women in a visible minority tend, even more than other women, to be compressed at lower levels.

...women in a visible minority tend to be compressed into the lower levels of each occupational group...even more than other women...

The Consultation Group has been struck by the serious additional problems women in this group face in the workplace. We believe their situation requires special attention so that the precise nature of their problems and their special needs are better understood.

To ensure that the results from the focus group study were as objective as possible, participants were selected on a random basis and their confidentiality was assured. Given the relatively low numbers of women at the levels studied who are doubly disadvantaged, the methodology did not permit "double disadvantage" to be included as a separate factor in the focus group study.

Further independent study is required to consider the unique obstacles to employment equity for each subgroup and to identify common problems.

Working in Regional or District Offices, in Line Operations, or in Non-Traditional Occupations

The literature suggests that women in regional and district offices often face disadvantages not experienced by women in headquarters offices. The Public Service is no exception. Regional and local operations often tend to be more traditional in culture, particularly if located outside major urban centres. In addition, opportunities for on-the-job development and advancement may be more limited within a region or district, particularly within a single department.

...women's representation in the executive entry levels was proportionately lower in the regions outside the National Capital Region.

As noted in the focus group methodology, women's representation in the executive entry levels was proportionately lower in the regions outside the National Capital Region.

...patterns of cultural and attitudinal barriers to workplace equity women face in the regions were similar to, if not greater than, those... in the National Capital Region.

From the regional focus groups, it was evident that the patterns of cultural and attitudinal barriers to workplace equity women face in the regions were similar to, if not greater than, those experienced in the National Capital Region.

One reason for the greater difficulties women experience in regional workplaces may be that, in addition to the factors cited above, regional and district offices tend to be line operations and may frequently involve non-traditional occupations for women. Line operations have a greater

tendency to be male-dominated, making entry and advancement more difficult for women. Slower rates of turnover and the smaller scale of regional operations also mean the isolation for lone women in these environments is likely greater than for their counterparts at headquarters. Given the scarcity of senior-level women line managers in the regions and districts, and the less visible presence of senior-level women, the positive demonstration effects of visible, competent women are less likely.

The Consultation Group encourages deputy ministers and senior line and regional managers to be particularly sensitive to this situation. Departmental plans for achieving gender equity should include specific measures for women in the regions in line operations and in non-traditional occupations. Specific measures might include creating telephone support networks, a "buddy system" to pair women with appropriate headquarters colleagues, a mentoring program, and specially tailored developmental opportunities.

Departments should make special efforts to ensure that information on developmental and advancement opportunities and on gender equity reaches all employees at all levels, not only in line operations, but also in regional and district offices.

CONCLUSIONS

Over seven years ago, the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service found that serious barriers blocked the advancement and full participation of women in the Public Service. These barriers were deep-rooted and ingrained in the attitudes and culture of the Public Service. The Task Force concluded that change would not occur automatically, but would have to be managed, supported by commitment from the top. Achieving results would be the responsibility of deputy ministers and their managers.

Based on the findings in this report, the Consultation Group concludes that, while some progress has been made, attitudes and behaviours continue to exist that negatively affect the jobs and lives of women in the Public Service.

...while some progress has been made [since **Beneath the Veneer***], attitudes and behaviours continue to exist that negatively affect the jobs and lives of women in the Public Service.*

Improvement in the "numbers" is heartening. There has been some improvement in the representation of women in the Public Service and in the entry levels of certain occupational groups. However, serious fundamental cultural and attitudinal

barriers to employment equity for women remain. The norms of a traditional male-dominated work environment continue to permeate the Public Service, impeding progress towards gender equity.

The current workplace climate of uncertainty, resource constraint, and downsizing is an important context within which to understand the experience of women in the Public Service. Many of the gains made for women to date, and their continuation, may be threatened if managers fail to understand that ensuring employment equity should be an integral part of all the other changes now under way.

Within the Public Service, we found that senior managers and executives generally demonstrated little understanding of how an equitable workplace could be valuable to their organization. Nor did these managers seem to appreciate the fundamental unfairness to women of existing inequities. They also seemed unaware of how important their managerial roles were in bringing about such change and they reported seeing no meaningful evidence of top-level commitment to this goal.

We found how a traditional workplace culture operating in the present environment can create double standards that work to the detriment of women. And we found how both women's recognized competence and the purpose of employment equity can be downplayed, if not ignored.

Achieving gender equity is a management issue and needs to be recognized as such. We found little recognition that good human resource management practices promoting gender equity also contribute to organizational renewal and the creation of a workplace that uses resources effectively and is fair to all employees.

We examined ways the traditional norms make the workplace a tougher environment for women than for men. The difficulties women experience in being selected for development and advancement suggest that there may be undue reliance on informal selection processes. This may indicate that formal selection processes should be examined to ensure that they are responding well to the current needs of managers in the present resource-constrained environment. The struggle many women and men face in maintaining a healthy balance between their work and family suggests that managers may be jeopardizing a more productive, welcoming, and effective workplace by failing to reasonably accommodate the various family circumstances of today's employees. The particular difficulties of women who are Aboriginal, have

...ensuring employment equity should be an integral part of all... changes now under way.

Achieving gender equity is a management issue and needs to be recognized as such... practices promoting gender equity... contribute to organizational renewal and... a workplace that uses resources effectively...

disabilities, or belong to a visible minority, and of those women in the regions and districts, in line operations, and in non-traditional occupations, need to be clearly recognized and addressed.

We found, as had *Beneath the Veneer*, that the perceptions of women and men differed profoundly on many of their workplace experiences. This finding contributed to our understanding of how attitudinal factors can seriously lessen the likelihood of a woman's equitable treatment in the workplace.

The Public Service can also be much harder on women than men through the operation of double standards, the lack of role models, harassment, and tougher appraisals.

We found that, where the situation of women is improving, it is happening principally through the efforts and determination of individual women and managers, whether women or men. This report can offer no evidence of a renaissance in the Public Service organizational culture, nor of a deeply felt organizational commitment to workplace equity for women.

Gender equity in the Public Service can benefit everyone. It is clearly "more than the numbers." It means bringing about an equitable workplace environment that values and fully employs all human resources, and readily accommodates change. Yet, with the uncertain climate of 1995, resource constraint, and downsizing, we found that the obstacles to gender equity could become even more entrenched, threatening the progress made so far. Unless there are changes in the Public Service culture, it is possible that even quantitative gains could be eroded.

There are many similarities underlying the government's broader goal of renewing the Public Service and the goal of bringing about gender equity in the workplace. Progress on both fronts is mutually reinforcing and will depend on the capacity of top-level leadership to transform the Public Service into a work environment that is flexible, uses resources effectively, is sensitive to clients' needs, that enables employees and that has human resource employment strategies that value all employees regardless of gender.

...where the situation of women is improving, it is happening principally through the... determination of individual women.

[There was] no evidence of a renaissance in the Public Service organizational culture, nor of a deeply felt organizational commitment to workplace equity for women.

Gender equity in the Public Service can benefit everyone.

...renewing the Public Service and... bringing about gender equity... [are] mutually reinforcing...

Key principles underlying the necessary cultural transformation are top-level understanding and commitment, managers' personal intervention, and active monitoring.

To bring about such fundamental change to their organizations means that managers at all levels and, most particularly, deputy ministers, must have the expert support and specialized training to enable them to tailor the change process to the unique circumstances of their organization. Key principles underlying the necessary cultural transformation are top-level understanding and commitment, managers' personal intervention, and active monitoring.

Action and continued vigilance are essential for change to occur. Departments must be held accountable for results on gender equity. Top management at the deputy minister and assistant deputy minister levels must personally lead the way. Operating departments need constructive leadership and support from the government's central agencies on Public Service renewal and from the Treasury Board Secretariat on best employment practices that stress the value of gender equity and the best ways of attaining it.

Every member of the Public Service... can make a difference in creating a fair workplace.

To start, it will be essential for deputy ministers to institute dialogue within their departments on the issues this report raises and to work with their employees to find solutions that best suit their departments. Every member of the Public Service must understand that they can make a difference in creating a fair workplace. Managers at all levels need to be impressed with the importance of gender equity and to undertake specific personal actions to demonstrate to their employees that they are committed to making the Public Service of Canada a gender-equitable place in which to work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

...seven recommendations for making the Public Service a gender-equitable workplace.

The Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women presents seven recommendations for making the Public Service a gender-equitable workplace. The aim of our recommendations is to eliminate the cultural and attitudinal barriers that women face as they work in the Public Service. These recommendations are based on the Consultation Group's assessment of the findings of the focus group study and the literature review outlined in this report. The recommendations fall into three categories:

Public Service Renewal

1. Gender Equity and Organizational Effectiveness

Reinforcing Earlier Messages

2. Accountability for Gender Equity
3. Valuing Gender Equity
4. Balancing Work and Family

New Areas

5. Improving the Harassment Policy
6. Developing Executives Who Are Women
7. Departmental Strategies

Public Service Renewal

This report underlines the close link between achieving both gender equity and Public Service renewal in the present context of continuing uncertainty, change, and resource constraint. Today's organization that performs well must have a workplace culture and employment strategies that use resources effectively, creating a fair and decent workplace that values and fully challenges all employees regardless of gender.

[Recognize] the close link between achieving... gender equity and Public Service renewal...

Successful transformation from a traditional to a contemporary organization starts with leadership from the top. However, to successfully achieve this result requires more than just top-level commitment. Managers at all levels must have the understanding and skills to bring about the needed change in organizational culture.

1. *Gender Equity and Organizational Effectiveness*

To renew the Public Service within a resource-constrained environment, and, in so doing, achieve gender equity, the present traditional culture of the Public Service workplace must become an up-to-date, equitable culture that functions well. To accomplish this:

[Transform] the present traditional culture of the Public Service.. [into an] up-to-date, equitable culture that functions well.

*   All executives and managers of each department should ensure they are informed about gender equity and have the support and training to implement and fully participate in such a cultural transformation.

- Central agencies should closely monitor progress towards gender equity as a key indicator of a department's progress on Public Service renewal and its effective employment of all its people, regardless of gender.

- Departments should develop and implement resource-effective long-term plans for using human resources effectively, retraining and redeploying employees who will be affected by technological change and work restructuring.

- Particular attention should be given to employees in administrative support occupations.

- Retraining of employees who know the organization and its clients and who have Public Service values should be encouraged.

Reinforcing Earlier Messages

The next three recommendations reinforce recommendations of the Consultation Group's first report, *Gender Balance: More Than the Numbers*. Our recommendations stress the role and responsibility of each department and manager for achieving meaningful and tangible results on gender equity.

[Ensure] explicit [departmental and managerial] accountability for results on gender equity.

2. Accountability for Gender Equity

There must be explicit accountability for results on gender equity:

- Departmental, managerial, and deputy ministerial accountability for realizing gender equity should be clearly defined, transparent, and reflected in specific objectives of the department's employment equity plan.

- In consultation with Statistics Canada and other experts, the Treasury Board Secretariat, together with departments, should develop and institute meaningful quantitative and qualitative indicators on the state of gender equity in each department and the Public Service overall, including indicators on the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women relative to men, by occupational group, level, region, and organizational structure. These indicators

should be included in annual public reports on each
department's gender equity status.

3. *Valuing Gender Equity*

Departments, their management, and every Public Service
employee need to understand the value of diversity and gender
equity in today's workplace and the contribution each can
make to achieve it. This message should be a leadership
priority for central agencies. Specifically:

*[Everyone must]
understand the value of
diversity and gender equity
in today's workplace...*

•   As Head of the Public Service, the Clerk of the Privy
    Council should ensure departments clearly understand the
    importance of achieving gender equity in the Public
    Service and the cultural and attitudinal changes needed at
    every level to ensure this.

•   The Treasury Board Secretariat should serve as a resource
    centre and facilitator for departments on gender equity and
    should lead in promoting gender equity.

•   The Public Service Commission and the Canadian Centre
    for Management Development should strengthen and
    promote training for supervisors, managers, and
    executives on the value of diversity and gender equity in
    the workplace and on how best to achieve it. This should
    include providing senior managers and executives with a
    "toolkit" for building a dialogue with their employees on
    improving gender equity in the workplace.

•   The Canadian Centre for Management Development, in
    consultation with the Treasury Board Secretariat, should
    become a centre of excellence for research on gender
    equity and on the best workplace practices for achieving
    and maintaining gender equity and enhancing
    organizational effectiveness, and ensure their findings are
    disseminated broadly.

•   The Canadian Centre for Management Development and
    the Treasury Board Secretariat should give immediate
    priority to understanding and addressing the challenge
    to workplace equity faced by "doubly disadvantaged"
    women (i.e., Aboriginal women, women of colour,
    and women with disabilities), women in occupations
    that are non-traditional for women, women in
    administrative support positions, and women in
    regional and district offices.

4. Balancing Work and Family

Departments should actively recognize their employees' needs to reasonably balance their work with their family-related and other responsibilities. Two actions are key to achieving policies in the workplace that are friendly toward families:

- Departments should ensure they have in place flexible human resource employment policies and practices that fairly recognize the various contemporary family-related responsibilities of all employees, whether women or men.

- Departments should systematically assess their worksites, workstyle patterns, career path assumptions, and other human resource employment practices to identify and implement changes that better permit work/family balance and better accommodate the various life cycle needs of their employees. Particular attention should be given to the value added to employee productivity and organizational effectiveness of measures that promote a better work/family balance. Some of these measures are awareness training for managers, "employer-organized/ employee pays" services, more flexible career paths, and effective work-at-home options.

New Areas

The findings from the focus group study and the literature review led the Consultation Group to identify important areas where the current Public Service culture and practices present particular problems for women. These recommendations aim to remedy these problems and provide departments with a strategic guide for action on gender equity.

5. Improving the Harassment Policy

[Institute a new approach to the Treasury Board's Harassment in the Work Place Policy.]

The Treasury Board's new Harassment in the Work Place Policy is commended. The Consultation Group recommends that the implementation of the policy should:

- Take a preventive approach to harassment, including educating managers and employees at all levels about harassment, and ensuring that the necessary training is available.

- Provide ongoing education for all employees, including all managers, on the norms of "acceptable" behaviour in the contemporary harassment-free workplace, as well as provide training for managers on preventing potential work-related harassment and effectively addressing any incidents that do occur. Priority should be given to training for those in workplace environments that are non-traditional for women, and to workplaces where women are concentrated or compressed at lower levels.

- Require departments to act on all harassment charges brought to their managers' attention and to institute a process for resolving harassment incidents that requires departmental managers to make greater use of counselling services, and, where necessary, expert mediation services.

- Hold departments and managers accountable for preventing workplace harassment and, should it occur, for ensuring incidents are resolved expeditiously and fairly.

6. Developing Executives Who Are Women

With the goal of ensuring the development and retention of a talent pool of qualified women in the Public Service who are at the executive level or who have executive potential, the Public Service Commission should:

[Develop] a talent pool of qualified women in the Public Service... at the executive level or... [with]... executive potential,...

- Assess, in consultation with the Canadian Centre for Management Development and outside experts, the specific training and development that women at the executive and executive entry levels may need. The goal should be to ensure that any particular training needs are addressed as an integral part of general executive development programs and that these women are well-integrated into the mainstream workplace environment.

- Develop, in consultation with departments and the Canadian Centre for Management Development, a strategy to ensure that women at the executive level and those with executive potential are provided with necessary mentoring support.

- Institute a program of confidential exit interviews with women at the executive entry level and above who leave or who change positions within the Public Service, so as to identify any contributing common patterns, and initiate action to remedy any problems identified.

7. Departmental Strategies

[Establish departmental strategies] for creating workplace culture and attitudes... conducive to achieving gender equity.

Each department's employment equity plan should include a strategy for creating workplace culture and attitudes that are conducive to achieving gender equity. This strategy should:

- Centre on a concerted program of open and constructive dialogue with employees about gender equity and the contribution each employee can make towards creating a fair workplace climate for all. This dialogue would start at the top and be led by managers.

- Be rooted in best practices that are tailored to the department's specific circumstances.

- Provide visible examples by establishing a "critical mass" of female employees in non-traditional areas and occupations for women, and by ensuring that key project teams reflect gender balance.

- Ensure that information on employment equity is effectively disseminated to all employees throughout the department, and that it reaches those at all levels in line operations and in regional and district offices.

- Institute a program to regularly monitor and evaluate the results of employment equity initiatives, including independently commissioned surveys of all employees on the overall organizational climate and on the state of employment equity throughout the organization.

THE VIEW FROM THE EX LEVEL:
Report on the Focus Groups and Interviews

by Environics-DRZ

For information on Environics-DRZ, see Appendix C.

INTRODUCTION

There were two principal issues to consider in the focus group and interview exercises:

- Had there been any progress since the release of *Beneath the Veneer* in removing the attitudinal and cultural barriers to the advancement of women in the Public Service?

- What, if any, was the impact of the early 1990s environment of downsizing and resource constraint on the achievement of such progress?

It was decided, in collaboration with members of the Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women, that the most useful and productive focus groups (given resource constraints) would be made up of entry-level executives, women and men at the EX minus 1 level, as well as at the EX-2 and EX-3 levels.

The EX minus 1 group was selected because a rich array of studies already exists to assist in assessing the situation for this group. Also, the literature review pointed to the executive entry group as the one in which women were most likely to hit a "glass ceiling." This raised the question of what factors lead to a "glass ceiling" (i.e., subtle barriers to advancement) in the Public Service, if indeed this phenomenon does exist. The EX-2 and EX-3 levels were also included so we could determine whether there were any significant differences in views between this group (to which the entry levels typically report) and the entry groups.

Environics-DRZ undertook 10 focus groups in Ottawa, Montreal, and Winnipeg. (For more detailed information on the methodology, see this appendix, Notes on Methodology. For more information on the focus groups, see Appendix C.) Female moderators met with four groups of women at the EX minus 1 level; male moderators met with four groups of men at the EX minus 1 level. Half of these groups were conducted in English, and the other half were conducted in French. In addition, a female moderator met with one group of women at the EX-2 and EX-3 levels and a male moderator met with the equivalent group of men. These latter two sessions were conducted in English in Ottawa and included participants from across the country. The focus groups were complemented

by a series of 10 one-on-one interviews conducted with selected women at the EX-2 and EX-3 levels and five interviews with selected men at these levels. The one-on-one interviews provided an opportunity to probe in greater depth and test the firmness of the focus group findings.

The findings from these focus groups, grouped by theme, are reported directly below. The general observations and implications from these findings and the notes on the methodology follow.

FINDINGS

All the focus group discussions took place within the context of the Public Service as an organization that is downsizing and facing severe resource constraints. This fact coloured many of the participants' perceptions of barriers to women in the Public Service. There was also widespread consensus among the participants that the present Public Service encourages long hours and disregards the family life of its employees. Balancing work and family was seen to become more difficult the higher employees rise in the Public Service.

Focus group moderators were particularly struck by the high degree of similarity in both the women's and men's responses on a large number of issues. There were even fewer differences along linguistic and regional lines, by executive role (generalist or specialist), and by level (i.e., between the entry-level group and those executives at the EX-2 and EX-3 levels).

The majority of the women who participated in this exercise felt they were pathbreakers for women within the Public Service. They had no models or female mentors to learn from. They all believed that the workplace would be better for the next generation of women in the Public Service, thanks in large part to their own efforts. Paradoxically, these women were at times rather impatient with the younger generation of both women and men who, they felt, expect the Public Service to accommodate their family and child care needs. The pathbreakers all felt they had made substantial sacrifices and had found ways to get ahead without the benefit of the programs younger women now have. This pathbreaking generation admitted, however, that they feel the younger generation of both women and men have a different ethic. They perceive the younger generation of Public Service employees as valuing family life and the balance between work and personal life more highly than the generation that preceded it.

While the Focus Group Discussion Guide included a number of specific questions, all the discussions centred around 10 themes. Accordingly, the findings have been organized by these themes.

Career Opportunities

- *When one arrived in the Public Service, if you were young, "bright-eyed and bushy-tailed," the future was yours.* (This comment was originally offered in French. Hereafter, translations of French comments will have "[F]" at the end of the translation.)
  (Male participant on what the Public Service was like 20 years ago when he entered it.)

All the focus group participants had felt the effects of downsizing. There was general agreement that the environment has become more competitive for both women and men as people compete for fewer and fewer positions. Nonetheless, women at the EX minus 1 level felt that the heightened competitive atmosphere reinforced the essentially "macho" culture of the Public Service, thus making it more difficult for women to get ahead. Participants equated a "macho" culture with an inordinate amount of competition. Women at the EX-2 and EX-3 levels stated categorically that downsizing has created an additional barrier to advancement for women due to the decline in opportunities for development and advancement. Due to downsizing, men expressed a greater fear of job loss than of lost promotional opportunities.

However, in discussing promotions and how they worked, some men, unlike any of the women, divided the positions in the Public Service into two categories: "real" jobs where competence was the only criterion, and jobs that were thought to be created for target groups (such as women and visible minorities) where, in the men's view, the competence of the ideal candidate did not appear to be the most important criterion. For these latter jobs, the men felt they were at a disadvantage.

The issue of "targets" received a great deal of attention from Anglophone men. A majority felt that targets forced managers to come to grips with the issue of employment equity; a minority argued that targets discriminated against the meritorious. As noted below, it was not clear what these men had in mind in discussing "targets" due to the confusion that existed between "targets" and "quotas" (which the Public Service has never had).

However, men generally acknowledged and accepted the competence of women, particularly when informed by the experience of working with female superiors. By and large, the few men who had little experience working with senior-level women as colleagues or superiors were most likely to appear convinced that women were being favoured by the system.

- *You have to deliver the results now. Who has time to develop potential?* [F]
  (Comment made by a woman on the lack of time for training in the era of downsizing.)

Women expressed concern that when senior managers looked for people to promote, the current downsizing environment favoured very experienced, "job-ready," usually male candidates as opposed to talented women who clearly had the ability but might need development or technical training, or who, as "outsiders" brought into a traditionally

male-dominated organization, might face a longer, initial learning curve on-the-job than a less talented alternative from within the organization. All participants felt that in the 1980s there had been more time for training in the Public Service, and allowances were made for the on-the-job learning curve. In the current environment, however, it was felt that the Public Service was only interested in immediate end results and employees who could be highly productive right away.

The only cautious optimism that was expressed on career development was the possibility of lateral movement as opposed to vertical movement. Some felt this was the wave of the future.

Employment Equity

- *As for me, I don't want to be treated as a "token."* [F]
  (Female participant on the subject of quotas.)

- *I have never seen a concrete result from employment equity.*
  (Female participant on employment equity.)

As the comments reported above demonstrate, both male and female participants were clearly confused about the meaning of "employment equity." While the federal Public Service has never had "quotas," there was a great deal of discussion (without prompting by any of the moderators), about quotas and whether or not they had been good for women. "Employment equity," "quotas," and "targets" were used interchangeably by participants, generally with the pejorative interpretations associated with "quotas," even though each word has its own, quite different meaning. Male participants, in particular, clearly perceived the existence of an informal quota system that they associated with employment equity programs.

The kindest comment made about employment equity was that it had been "*un mal nécessaire,*" a necessary evil. Both men and women felt that quotas were an insult to women. Women said that they did not want to play the "token" game, that it was an insult to them personally and to women overall.

The women felt particular outrage when they were selected simply because they were women to sit on committees that were dealing with issues with which they had no experience. It was clear to them in such instances that they were being asked to play the token/quota game. The women did not see these occasions as developmental opportunities. As one female participant put it, she did not want to succeed in the Public Service because she was a woman, or because she was Native, but because she was a competent individual.

The men sensed that their female colleagues were not comfortable with what was perceived to constitute employment equity. One man observed that he had never heard a woman tell her colleagues that she had obtained a promotion because she filled a quota. Another man commented that the majority of the women he had worked with or for in the Public Service had never played the token game or tried to take advantage of employment

equity programs. Indeed, most of the male participants at the EX minus 1 level felt that the women who reached senior management positions rarely spoke about employment equity programs or policies when explaining their rise to the top; rather, they underlined their own competence.

Men at the EX minus 1 level did not see any problem with having employment equity programs for women for the clerical and secretarial occupational groups. In their view, women at this level continue to face serious barriers. In the words of one male participant: "If the clerks and secretaries feel the need for such measures — that's okay." [F] (Whether or not this would be supported by men at comparable levels in the clerical and secretarial occupational groups was not discussed.)

Women were divided over the value of employment equity programs; some were cynical about their effectiveness, while others felt targets provided necessary norms and goals to which the Public Service should aspire.

The men's perceptions of quotas (which have never existed in the Public Service) and employment equity programs made many men feel that they were being asked to sacrifice their own advancement for that of women. They agreed with the premise that a woman should have an equal opportunity to apply for a position for which they themselves might be competing, but were adamant that the position should not be awarded solely on the basis of gender.

While employment equity programs came in for a fair amount of criticism among male participants, a significant minority of these men bemoaned the lack of female colleagues at their own level. Having gone to school and then to university with women, dealing with them on what they felt to be an even playing field, they were dismayed to find 10 years into their careers that the only women they worked with were secretaries or clerks. When probed about what the solution might be, these men sensed that the situation was slowly changing and that, with time, things would be different for their daughters and sons.

Some women felt that access to adequate management training and mentoring was still important and would be more helpful to them than employment equity (i.e., skill-building is needed more than targets).

Generally, senior management and central agencies were criticized for not "walking the talk" on employment equity. A real commitment from the top down as well as real accountability by the "centre" and by departments were seen to be very important in resolving inequities:

- *...you need a Clerk of the Privy Council and key people who are committed and it will trickle down — everyone will be committed because their jobs are on the line.*

Both women and men at the EX-2 and EX-3 levels suggested that the improvement most needed was a constructive attitude towards achieving gender equity. In particular, the active demonstration of gender equity by assistant deputy ministers, deputy ministers, and central agencies was regarded as key to removing barriers to women.

At the executive entry level, the presence of women in line management positions at the director-general level was seen to provide effective role models. On the other hand, the practice of "cherry-picking" (i.e., constantly promoting and moving the same women from department to department) was identified by several participants, and was criticized as unfair to both women and men and as evidence of a paternalistic approach to employment equity.

Work and Family

Both women and men believe that the Public Service encourages long hours and disregards the family life of its employees. Balancing work, family, and personal life is seen to become even more difficult at the more senior levels.

Interestingly enough, programs that have been instituted by the Public Service and clauses in the Collective Agreement (such as one that allows employees leave without pay to care for pre-school age children, as well as the part-time work option) were seen as suicidal to career advancement if one took advantage of them, whether one was female or male. One woman compared it to slitting one's throat. The message that a woman sent through "the system" was that she was not serious about her career if she took advantage of these programs. The judgement was made that one chose to follow either a "career track" or a "parent track." It was felt that a day care program instituted by the Public Service would be a much more adequate and workable solution than non-discretionary leave without pay which, in one woman manager's words, wreaked havoc in her unit in the summer months when a number of women asked for this leave:

- *It crossed my mind, if a mother wants three months of leave to look after a child under five, this is the reality for a manager, whether man or woman.* [F]

As with other issues of balancing work and family responsibilities, men felt that the lack of day care was a problem, but they saw it as a woman's problem. In the words of one male participant: "The absence of day care is a bit of a handicap for women." [F] This statement confirmed one female participant's view that day care is not "on the male agenda."

- *Today, everybody has equal opportunity.* [F]

Significantly, both female and male participants were very uncomfortable with the word "barriers." Francophone women at the EX minus 1 level said that it was not a question of barriers but a question of "choices." They felt that they had chosen to have children and that choice meant difficult career decisions. One participant from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade said that the minute she decided to have children, she knew that she was no longer on the path to becoming the ambassador to China.

Yet as these women discussed these "choices," they came to a consensus that the structure of the Public Service today is the barrier forcing them to make choices that make career advancement more difficult. The culture and the work ethic espoused by the

Public Service, in their view, is excessively "macho," designed for men who have wives who stay at home to take care of children. Women felt that the hours expected of someone who wants to advance — generally identified as 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. — were impossible when one has children, particularly children who need to be picked up from day care or after-school programs by 5 p.m.

- *Whether it's a woman or a man, it takes people who, at any given moment, are capable of putting aside their family life and saying, "For me, it's my career that matters." [F]*

The definition that men gave of a "career woman" reinforces the comments made by the female participants. In the eyes of Public Service employees, a career woman removes herself from her family life, indeed, divorces herself from a number of things that society has traditionally identified with women — such as child care and the home. Yet, male participants also defined the "career man" in much the same fashion, a man who divorces himself from his family life. All participants, female and male, expressed a degree of disgust that in order to get ahead in the Public Service, one had to sacrifice a balance between work and personal life.

- *I am a little concerned about an ethic that sees time spent at the office as an indication of dedication and professionalism.*

- *We need more support for women with families...Family values are important...we shouldn't have to give that up.*

- *It is less a man versus woman issue, but more a family versus work ethic...*

- *What manager will tell you not to work 60 hours? You are making a statement if you cut to 37. We have policies...collective agreements — you make yourself work 60 hours...*

- *If you [a woman] have to leave a boardroom table at 4:30 in the afternoon, they make note of it, and it bothers them. Even if it is a rare occasion, they never forget it. It is not something men are expected to do.*

The Old-Boys' Network

There was one subject that emerged and on which — regardless of level, language, location, or executive role — women and men consistently diverged sharply. This concerned one of the most subtle but real barriers that women feel they face — "the old-boys' network." Men acknowledged the existence of old-boys' networks — whereby one gets ahead by having lunch with the boss, playing golf with the boss and other male colleagues, drinking together after work or while travelling together on business. However, these men saw it as a barrier of the "past." Some men, in fact, were adamant that this did not constitute a barrier any longer although some admitted that women were still not part of the network. Women, on the other hand, identified this as a major barrier. One woman compared it to a king and his court, where the boss and his aspiring

heirs played the succession game; in this woman's words — "There are almost no women at court."

- *Some senior people are not walking the talk.*

- *I'd like to see employment equity remove the old-boys' network.*

- *Women get a fair crack, but the hierarchy is very male-dominated by those traditional lifestyles. They really like their own kind.*

- *Things are changing — older men have the problem. I understand that group but don't like those men around 50 that pretend to be sympathetic.*

The older, traditional male group at senior levels was also seen to have the strongest adherents to the excessive work expectations at the higher levels; this is the group most attached to the 60-hour week, a schedule that makes it difficult for men and women with families. There was great debate among women participants as to whether such hours were necessary.

There was consensus, however, that small changes, like eliminating meetings after 5 p.m., could help tremendously. Such a change was identified as one small part of the cultural adjustment that women felt is needed in the Public Service. Some felt that newer organizational units in the Public Service, where the average age is younger, were already marked by a positive cultural change along these lines.

The following exchange between two participants is highly illustrative of the culture in which women feel they are operating:

- *Do you want to be superwoman? Kill myself? Forget it!*

- *System says you have to do it.*

- *Then change the rules!*

Perceptions About Women at the Top

Whether valid or not, the perceptions of those in the executive entry level about a woman at the top are instructive.

- *There are no women DMs or ADMs that have the husband, the two kids or the dog.*

- *The question is: do women without children rise to high-level positions because they don't have children or, as they are rising to high-level positions, they decide not to have children? Which comes first?*

- *Women who succeed in breaking into a network of male managers have a tendency to behave rather like men as well...* [F]

- *...if a woman is a DG, she is watched. Is she cooperative? Is she good-looking? What time does she come in and leave? She should be perfect with her family but also be at the office all day and night.*

The perception of what kinds of women make it to the top in the Public Service does not differ between women and men. By and large the perception is that these women do not have happy family lives or even balanced lives. They also have different work habits than women at the lower levels of the Public Service. In the minds of women at the EX minus 1 level, these senior-level women subscribe to the unspoken male rule of the 12-hour day and 60-hour week. They are also perceived to be more aggressive. However, as reflected in one participant's view, women who want to get to the top have no choice but to be aggressive. Excluded from the "network," when a position comes up in which they are interested, they have to approach the boss directly and ask to be considered for the promotion, whereas a male colleague will already be positioned by playing the networking game. In some women's minds, a boss will always think first of the *"guy he plays golf with"* before he thinks of anyone else for a promotion.

A number of women commented that as they made their way up the echelons to the executive entry level, they found that the dominant culture there was overwhelmingly "macho": competitive and permeated by an old-boys' club that excluded women. The emphasis placed at the senior levels on networking with the "old boys" is both a deterrent (due to the social isolation women expect to experience) and a barrier to women who aspire to senior management levels in the Public Service. Female participants also felt that it was very important and useful to have a greater number of directors-general who were women as role models in addition to deputy ministers, who were not "visible enough."

- *Women don't want to work in that climate and maybe discount it because maybe they don't feel they fit in.*

- *There isn't a female network...management interests me less and less.* [F]

Yet when women attempted to do their own networking among women colleagues, their male colleagues derided them as "ladies lunching." Indeed, many women at the EX minus 1 level said they had no desire to become a "senior EX" because they did not fit in or feel comfortable with the culture at that level.

Clearly, the culture at the top, whether as it is perceived or as it actually is, deters some women from aspiring to the ranks of senior management.

Working Relations Between Women and Men

Intrinsically linked to the barrier of the old-boys' network was the state of relations between women and men within individual work units. By and large, men felt the relations were good. Women, on the other hand, said they were either "non-existent" or civil at best.

Very few of the women had ever been invited out to lunch by a male colleague, even less frequently by a male superior. This was particularly frustrating as women perceived lunch with the boss as one route men in the Public Service take to get ahead. One female participant said she had attempted to solve this problem by taking the initiative and inviting her boss to lunch. However, she clearly felt that he was not comfortable, even though he acquiesced to her request.

Other women said that they felt many of their male colleagues and superiors were not relaxed in a woman's presence when a woman was part of the group in a meeting or in a work-related social situation. The women often were made to feel that they were intruding, because the men were "buddies." Women found the social isolation they experienced in the workplace difficult. They also felt as a result that men were not being as frank or open in their presence and that this sometimes led to women's not being given (whether intentionally or not) important work-related information that their male colleagues had.

Some women felt that relations improved as women got older and gained more experience:

- *As you get older, you get taken more seriously. I had a boss who used to call me "princess."*

A number of women had stories to tell about travelling when they were younger with male superiors or male peers on business and being asked to handle secretarial tasks that were not expected of their male colleagues.

While most men recognized the competence of women and did not have any problems working with female peers or even with female superiors, they candidly pointed out that women at the deputy minister level are still a novelty:

- [Female deputies] *aren't exactly "pinstripe." Ottawa.* [F]

It should be noted that in some focus groups (both female and male) there was very little response or discussion around this issue of relations between women and men. In other groups, once started, the topic generated an extensive and lively discussion.

Harassment of Women

Women said that their male colleagues treated women differently according to the woman's level in the hierarchy. This is reflected in the incidence and type of harassment of women in the Public Service that participants witnessed or experienced at different levels. From personal experience and observation, senior-level women reported that their male peers were more likely to sexually harass women in subordinate positions. Some men confirmed that they had witnessed the same patterns.

In fact, almost all the participants, both female and male, reported knowing of, or experiencing, harassment of women of some kind (whether sexual, gender-related, or simply an abuse of power). No one raised the issue of harassment experienced by men.

A majority of both the women and the men felt that there was far more overt harassment of women in the secretarial and clerical groups by their superiors than of women in the management or professional groups. A significant number of the women reported witnessing their male peers harassing clerks or secretaries with rude or lewd comments. They also felt that harassment of those women occurred through a superior's abuse of power.

Indeed, out of this discussion, both female and male participants acknowledged that a study of barriers to the advancement of women presently in administrative support jobs would be timely as they all felt these women faced greater and sometimes different barriers than women at the management level.

Women at the EX minus 1 level as well as the EX-2 and EX-3 levels stated that "harassment" experienced by women was much more subtle at their level and tended to be gender-related rather than sexual. The harassment ranged from unfair appraisals, isolation and consistent exclusion from key meetings and information, to women constantly having to prove their competence, or to men undermining women's authority, and to women experiencing subtle abuses of power.

Double Standard: Tougher on Women

Despite the men's perception that men were effectively being asked to sacrifice their own advancement while women benefited from employment equity, there was no explicit indication of a backlash directed at women as a result.

At the same time, both men and women reported that there was a double standard. Both thought men were tougher on women in their appraisals, and women who failed were judged more harshly than men, particularly in the more senior levels of the Public Service.

In considering the inequities experienced by women in the workplace, men did not particularly feel that they had an individual responsibility to remedy this situation, nor did they see it as a management problem.

However, participants recognized that the secretarial and clerical occupational groups (which are predominantly female) were increasingly vulnerable to the pressures of technological change, which has the potential to eliminate or fundamentally change the jobs and prospects of people in these groups.

Given the large number of women whose careers would be affected by these changes, sound human resource planning was identified as essential. Failure to identify alternate career paths for members of this group and to address their training needs was recognized as a major obstacle to the career progress of this group.

Some participants felt that management insufficiently appreciated the seriousness of this situation for many women, and that this could be partly linked to the fact that those principally affected were women rather than men. It was recognized too that, under the pressure of uncertainty about their job futures, these women would be increasingly vulnerable to harassment in the workplace.

Differences Between Women and Men

Women felt that they were more flexible and better organized than their male counterparts. Some women felt that this may be why women tend to have staff jobs. Others disagreed; some women felt that women in the Public Service have generalist training, making them ideal for line management jobs. Women also saw themselves as more practical, less turf-oriented, more people-oriented and cooperative than men.

Men generally reported there were no significant differences that distinguished women from men in carrying out their jobs.

Advice for New Employees in the Public Service

- *Be political — women say they don't want to be in the game — well, they are in the game and are either playing it well or poorly.*
  (Female participant's advice to a new female employee.)

In light of comments by women on the need to change the dominant "macho" culture of the Public Service, as well as the frustration expressed about the old-boys' network, the comment above seems somewhat contradictory. The women in the focus groups had serious concerns about the way the system is structured but their advice to women entering it is practical for the present context. They advise them "to play the game and network." Female participants also advised women to be very direct about their career aspirations.

- *What's important in an organization is to send a clear message that you want to go on to higher levels.* [F]

- *You have to be direct and not hold back.* [F]

- *You have to ignore the barriers.* [F]

Participants were asked what advice they would give to women and men beginning a career in the Public Service and what advice they would give to a woman or a man starting at the EX-1 level. The women said that they would counsel a woman starting out in the Public Service to find herself a mentor, and "network, network, network" They also stressed the importance of knowing one's culture, the culture of one's department and division. Male participants echoed this advice for their male counterparts.

- *Reputation is important in making progress with men. You have to work hard to maintain that reputation...*

Both female and male participants saw ongoing education as a key factor in getting ahead.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Progress Since *Beneath the Veneer*

- To borrow from the proverbial observation about "the glass is either half-full or half-empty," for women and men at the executive level in the Canadian Public Service, progress on achieving employment equity for women might be best characterized as "the glass is quite full," or "quite empty," depending on gender. Men see the glass as being quite full, believing much progress has been made. In some cases men believe this progress has come at their own expense. Women see the glass as being quite empty and feel that much more progress needs to be made before gender balance will be a reality within the Canadian Public Service.

- Overt barriers to women at the executive level are gone. Attitudinal and cultural barriers remain.

- When women seek developmental opportunities or promotions, barriers are more likely to appear during the informal search for potential candidates (the identification process) rather than during the formal selection or hiring process.

- What women and men at the executive level reported (both directly and indirectly) during the focus group discussions is generally consistent with what the literature review revealed.

The Public Service

- The impact of downsizing on executives in the Public Service has been to heighten the "macho" culture and competitive atmosphere within the Public Service.

- The degree of change taking place in the Public Service of the 1990s is stressful for executives.

- There is little direct backlash against women in the Public Service; the backlash that does exist is against policies.

Senior Management

- Senior management and central agencies "do not walk the talk." A verbal commitment to gender balance exists but it is not supported by concrete action.

- Senior management should play more of a leadership role in trying to achieve an equitable gender balance in the Public Service.

- A stronger commitment to removing attitudinal barriers to women in the Public Service is still needed. Assistant deputy ministers, in the view of EX 2s and EX 3s, are seen to be critical in removing barriers to women.

- There is a need for senior human resource personnel with active networks of women. While it is symbolically important to have women at the deputy minister level, a greater number of women at the director-general level in line management positions, as well as directors-general of human resources, is crucial if attitudinal change is to occur. This is due to the fact that directors-general are perceived to be more visible than deputy ministers and are indicative of real change.

- Diversity training is required for managers, including those at senior levels.

- In promoting women at the senior level, "cherry picking" (the practice of constantly promoting and moving the same women from department to department) should be avoided.

- The development of non-gender-based fast-track programs should be strongly considered.

- More skill development programs based on on-the-job experience are needed.

- There should be a strong focus on mentoring.

The Public Service Is Still Tougher on Women

- The work environment must become more friendly to women, especially to those with parental responsibilities.

- Employer-facilitated day care should be strongly considered.

- The Public Service should be more adventurous in encouraging alternative work arrangements.

- The competence of those women in executive positions is generally recognized.

- The system is very tough on women in the upper echelons of the Public Service who fail.

- A double standard exists in performance appraisals; they are tougher on women.

- Technology is becoming a growing threat to the "pink ghetto," that is, to those women who are concentrated in the secretarial and clerical occupational groups. Research in this area is critical to the Public Service's future as an equal opportunity employer.

- Sexual and gender-related harassment of women, whether overt or subtle, continues to be a serious problem for women.

- Exit interviews with women leaving the system or changing departments would be highly useful.

Employment Equity Policies

- Both women and men in the Public Service are very confused as to what the term "employment equity" means and what policies are currently in place. Participants equate employment equity policies with quotas (which the federal Public Service has never had). Based on this rather confused perception, both women and men react negatively to notions of employment equity. Men do so because they believe the policy results in men being shut off from possible opportunities to advance. Women feel that they are perceived to have been promoted merely because they are women, not because they are talented and competent. Despite these perceptions, it is widely felt that targets should be specified with appropriate accountability to ensure that the issue of gender balance receives proper attention from all managers.

- The Public Service needs to better explain to its employees what employment equity means and what the policies are.

- Targets for every cohort should be maintained and enhanced as they will continue to signal the importance of this issue. Sectors or nodes within departments should be targeted for change. Departments and divisions that consistently fall well below target levels should be subject to a review process.

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

For purposes of this project, it was decided that gender, level, language, region, and executive role were the priority characteristics of the participants to consider in determining what, if any, differences in views could be linked to these characteristics. Consideration was also given to refining the focus groups to consider the impact of other characteristics, such as membership in another employment equity target group (i.e., visible minority, disabled, Aboriginal), age, level of education, or years in the Public Service. With the exception of the "age" factor (to which the focus group moderators were attuned), these other characteristics were not systematically addressed, due either to resource constraints, or because of methodological limitations. For

example, there were too few women in the executive entry levels who were also members of the other employment equity target groups (referred to as "doubly-disadvantaged") to satisfy the confidentiality criterion of the methodology.

To allow for assessment by the selected characteristics, Environics-DRZ felt that focus groups of entry-level participants should be held in a variety of Canada's regions with some groups taking place in English and others in French. However, in drawing the sample, it became evident that there was not a large enough number of women at the EX minus 1 level outside the National Capital Region to draw a random sample. To retain the regional element yet ensure the confidentiality of all participants, it was decided to include women at the EX minus 2 level in areas where there were not enough women at the EX minus 1 level. It was determined that this adjustment would not bias the results significantly, since the next promotional move open to most of these women would be at the executive level.

Accordingly, the focus group sessions were held in cities in the regions, in the languages from which a representative, random sample could be drawn: Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Montreal. The English groups were drawn from the Winnipeg and Ottawa regions, the French groups from the Montreal and Ottawa regions. Focus group participants were chosen randomly from lists that were sent to Environics-DRZ by the human resource units of a range of federal departments (see Appendix F) in Ottawa, Montreal, and Winnipeg.

Potential participants were contacted by telephone and asked if they would be willing to participate in focus groups conducted by Environics-DRZ on behalf of the Treasury Board Secretariat, on the general topic of human resource management issues in the Public Service. They were assured that their participation was completely voluntary and confidential. This general topic was used to preclude self-selection based on the more specific topic of gender balance issues. More than 90 per cent of those contacted were very keen to participate and those who were unable to attend at the last minute were kind enough to call to cancel.

All the focus groups were conducted during May 1993 in federal government facilities. The Ottawa sessions took place at the Canadian Centre for Management Development and the Montreal sessions were held at the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (now part of Industry Canada). In Winnipeg, participants gathered at Western Economic Diversification Canada. The one-on-one interviews were conducted about the same time.

All moderators used the Focus Group Discussion Guide, which was developed by Environics-DRZ in conjunction with members of the Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women (see Appendix G). Before beginning the discussion, participants were asked to fill out a short questionnaire that had been designed along the same lines as the Focus Group Discussion Guide (see Appendix H). This was to help the moderators assess any differences in answers that were expressed verbally in the focus groups as opposed to what participants committed to paper beforehand. Appendix I summarizes the findings from the questionnaire. The questionnaire also identified which participants were specialists as opposed to managers (Appendix J) and which were from central agencies compared to policy or line departments.

All moderators commented on the very positive mood of these meetings. Participants were very eager to express their views on barriers to women in the workplace and on programs designed to eliminate barriers.

LITERATURE REVIEW:
Recent Progress of Gender Equity in the Workplace

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women commissioned Environics-DRZ to undertake a survey of the literature on workplace equity for women that has been published since the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service embarked on its research program in 1988.

The Environics-DRZ review focused on issues concerning the progress of women in Canadian and American workplaces that were raised in the Task Force's 1990 report, *Beneath the Veneer,* as well as on new issues that have emerged since, mainly as a result of the changing workplace environment. As background, they also reviewed the four principal Canadian studies carried out over the previous 25 years on barriers to the advancement, retention, and promotion of women in the Canadian public sector at the national level.

Insights gained from the literature survey assisted in the design and assessment of the focus group study conducted for the Consultation Group. (See Appendix A to this report.) Once the focus group study was completed and its key issues were identified, the Consultation Group probed more deeply into both published and unpublished examinations of those concerns. The present review combines, by theme, the Consultation Group's findings with the initial findings from the literature survey.

Outline

The literature review's findings are in four sub-sections. The first summarizes the four studies of gender equity in the Canadian public sector up to *Beneath the Veneer*. Major developments in the workplace environment since the 1990 release of *Beneath the Veneer* are outlined next. The third sub-section reports findings on the cultural and attitudinal barriers women experience at work, including analyses that contribute to understanding why these barriers occur and how they operate in the Public Service and elsewhere. The fourth sub-section reviews findings on "symptoms" of such barriers that were of particular concern to the Consultation Group. Approaches that worked in eliminating or addressing these barriers are reviewed next. A complete listing of the references for the literature review appears at the end of this appendix.

FINDINGS

Past Reviews

In the past quarter century in Canada, four major studies considered gender equity issues within the federal Public Service. The initial focus was on eliminating obvious barriers and opening up opportunities for women. With progress on these fronts, attention shifted to the "invisible" cultural and attitudinal obstacles that impeded women's progress in the workplace.

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1967)

The Commission, which reported in 1971, made 167 recommendations, 24 relating to the federal government as an employer. The recommendations were aimed at eliminating obvious discrimination and providing opportunities for women. These included reviewing the Public Service's classification system; increasing the number of women doing non-traditional work; expanding staffing criteria (giving credit for experience as a volunteer, as well as paid work); creating bridging programs; introducing pay equity; expanding part-time work; and introducing new structures to implement the recommendations and monitor progress (Canada. Task Force 1990, I-12).

Sex and the Public Service (1969)

The study by Kathleen Archibald was commissioned to "investigate all issues related to the federal government's role as an employer of women" (Archibald 1970, iii). Its recommendations included the establishment of an equal opportunity program in the federal Public Service; recruitment, selection, and placement improvements; changes in the classification structures and training programs; expansion of part-time work; provision for pension reform; child care; and research and data collection.

The Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (1984)

Through its report, often referred to as the Abella Report, this Commission brought the term "employment equity" to the forefront. The report recommended that federally regulated industries be required under new legislation to implement employment equity, and advocated improved data collection as well as improvements in training and hiring (Canada. Royal Commission on Equality 1984).

Beneath the Veneer (1990)

The report of the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service, *Beneath the Veneer,* was concerned with achieving results on workplace equity for women. It recommended that the federal government intervene more forcefully in existing Public Service patterns of employment, training, and promotional practices than it had in the

past. The Task Force recommended measures for achieving a more balanced representation of women throughout all occupational groups and levels in the Public Service by focusing efforts on three aspects of balanced representation where progress could be monitored:

- eliminating the *compression* of women in the lower levels of the Public Service;

- reducing the *concentration* of women in a limited number of occupational groups;

- improving the *representation* of women in senior management and Order-in-Council appointments.

Like the reports that preceded it, *Beneath the Veneer* revisited many issues that were a concern to successive governments. It called for an overhaul of the classification system, more developmental training, and recognition of pension plan contributions for part-time workers. However, this report focused less on legislative and institutional changes than had past reports, primarily because much of the necessary legislative authority was by then in place.

Although the Task Force recognized these measures as important, they were not considered sufficient to eliminate the inequities women faced in the Public Service. The Task Force concluded that the principal factors yet to be addressed were cultural and attitudinal barriers. Eliminating these barriers was seen as a management responsibility that would have the added benefit of contributing to the overall effectiveness of the Public Service.

Developments in the Workplace
Environment Since *Beneath the Veneer*

Progress on Gender Equity in the Public Service

Recent federal government information (Treasury Board Secretariat, unpublished) shows that based on representation shares alone, there has been progress for women overall, and for the Executive and executive entry groups. Compared to 1990, by the end of 1993, women's representation in the Public Service increased from 45 per cent to 47 per cent, despite a slight reduction in the size of the Public Service. Over the same period, the representation of women in the Executive group increased from 15.1 per cent to 18.2 per cent, although the actual number of women remained virtually unchanged at 725 (the Executive group was reduced by almost 17 per cent over this period). The representation of women in the executive entry level group (which grew by almost 8 per cent over this period), increased from 15.9 per cent to 20.9 per cent.

Since 1990, new measures to strengthen employment equity in the Public Service have included amendments to the *Financial Administration Act* that require the government to ensure departments develop multi-year employment equity plans for improving representation of women, with targets, action plans, and timetables; to monitor results; and to provide an annual report to Parliament on the state of employment equity in the Public Service.

Other new measures that benefit women are: legislative amendments to improve pension benefits for Public Service employees in part-time positions (most are women), the promotion of flexible work arrangements, and the provision of diversity training courses to Public Service employees aimed at changing attitudes on diversity in the workplace.

In 1991, the Secretary of the Treasury Board established the Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women. The Group released its first report, *Gender Balance: More Than the Numbers*, in May 1992, followed by its study, *Case Studies on Best Practices in the Employment of Women*, in May 1993. Some departments published comprehensive studies on barriers to women in their sectors (e.g., Communications: *Beyond Hierarchy*; Treasury Board Secretariat: *Report on Focus Groups for Women in the Finance Community*). The Canadian Centre for Management Development has sponsored various studies that considered specific gender equity issues.

The above studies echoed *Beneath the Veneer,* observing that achieving an equitable workplace for women is "more than the numbers" and that cultural and attitudinal factors remain the main barrier to the equitable employment and advancement of women. Some of these studies raised concerns that recent developments in the workplace environment, such as downsizing, increasing uncertainty, restructuring and management reforms, technological changes, and even measures directed at improving employment equity, carried the risk of worsening the situation for women. The studies recognized that these same developments presented potential opportunities for women.

Downsizing, Uncertainty, and Management Reforms

Two reports in the *OECD Observer* on women and the restructuring of employment question whether, as a result of downsizing and management modernization in public sector organizations, women's jobs are being disproportionately affected, recognizing that occupational segregation by gender persists (Coré, Washington 1994, 5-12). The analysis further questioned whether greater managerial discretion, expected under current management reforms, will open doors to the advancement of women or will create new scope for discrimination. A corollary issue is whether centrally determined equal opportunity programs and rules are at odds with the new spirit of increased managerial freedoms.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) analysis observes that generally these questions cannot be answered without systematic assessment and monitoring, little of which is occurring in OECD countries. The report notes, however, that "many service jobs held by women are to be found in branches of activity that are undergoing extensive restructuring because of changing patterns of competition, or in the case of the public sector, the necessity of [reining-in] spending and reducing the deficit" (Coré 1994, 7).

In the public sector, OECD countries appear to have relied mainly on equal opportunity policies that are centrally determined, but administered by individual agencies. Changes to this centrally driven approach are now beginning to accompany wider management reforms. In Finland and New Zealand, for example, individual public sector agencies have assumed primary responsibility for designing their own equal opportunity programs (Washington 1994, 11).

The OECD article observes that with decentralization, monitoring systems become critical to determining whether equity and fairness are being attained. It also points out that a decentralized, results-oriented focus means governments will need to be clear on "what sort of public service they want in the future" and what "good employer" signals they want to give the private sector. Governments will also have to ensure "that managerial discretion does not lead to discrimination" (Washington 1994, 11). The corresponding pressures in Canada for public sector management reforms under Public Service renewal suggest that such developments will provide a new context for policies that promote gender equity.

The OECD article concludes that "the benefits accruing through effective equal-opportunity measures are compelling" and "are all consistent with the underlying objectives of public-management reform." However, to obtain these benefits in the new work environment, the article suggests that "new or adjusted equal opportunity measures that are compatible with, support, and are supported by the new managerialism may be required" (Washington 1994, 11).

Harvard University business administration professor and management consultant, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, has written extensively on managing change in organizations in an environment of resource constraint, downsizing, uncertainty, and survival. In 1987, she wrote that "downsizing of the workforce and elimination of many middle-management positions have made people feel stuck, without much opportunity ahead of them" (Kanter 1987b, 15). And while participation programs are empowering workers, "many managers feel their own power is diminished. So they 'retaliate' by turning into petty bureaucrats who find ways to defeat the participation programs" (15). She observes that stagnant bureaucracies "limit opportunities and power for everyone — and suffer the financial consequences of a turned-off workforce" (16). Her studies have found "a strong statistical association between those companies with more progressive human resource practices (including EEO [equal employment opportunity], employee involvement, and support for working parents) and superior long-term financial performance" (16).

Kanter observes that, for women, turbulence, competitiveness, and survival concerns

> Create another set of obstacles. With greater perceived risks inherent in business activities, there is an accompanying tendency to make "safer" choices of people — to pick the known over the unknown. As most women are still relative newcomers to the corporate world with limited track records of virtue under fire, they do not look like safe choices. As external change increases, companies prefer to stay with familiar types of people — despite the obvious need for internal change. We seem to need the comfort of the familiar as a defense against the anxiety evoked by too much change (Kanter 1987b, 16).

She goes on to remark that she remains cautiously optimistic about the future:

> As long as we see the problems of equal opportunity as structural and organizational in nature — and reject any old-fashioned notions of *inherent* limitations caused by one's sex — then we can make progress...Ignoring *any* source of talent and motivation will unduly restrict a company.
>
> In the past ten years, women have shown undeniable talent and competence in a wide range of fields. And in many cases, because they're still number two, they even try harder" (16).

In 1990, Kanter cautions managers about the restructuring under way in many corporations. She notes that in the stampede to restructure and become lean and mean, some U.S. businesses are in danger of embracing "cowboy management," and warns that this in-house competition can depress performance and decrease alternatives (Kanter 1990, 12-13). Earlier, she suggested that the point of restructuring is for organizations to become lean without becoming mean (Kanter 1989). In 1987, she wrote that even without restructuring, organizations can systematically become more competitive by more effectively using all the people power they already have, by innovation, by breaking down traditional barriers, and by bringing about other needed changes under leaders — change masters — who have mastered the art of creation and organizational revitalization (Kanter 1987a; 1987c).

The uncertainty about how to manage downsizing and improve productivity while making progress on gender equity in the workplace is reflected in a *Canadian Business* magazine cover story, "Big Chill: How Race and Gender Issues Polarize the Workplace" (Crawford 1993).

"Never before has there been so much confusion about what is appropriate behaviour in the workplace," wrote Michael Crawford. "Already under pressure to improve productivity and to hang onto their jobs, managers and employees at every level now face the added strain of trying to adjust their attitudes to shifting standards on racial and

gender issues." Clearly, the presence of a large number of women in the workforce as well as the development of employment equity policies both in the public and private sectors have engendered a degree of change that has been difficult for a number of individuals. Policies have changed, but the necessary supporting attitudes are not always in place.

In writing on how to make diversity pay, Faye Rice comments that studies showed few U.S. companies thought they were doing a good job of managing diversity and infusing it into their corporate culture, in some cases because of the imperatives of downsizing and because of a lack of commitment to diversity (Rice 1994). But she notes that some leading companies had successfully stuck with their commitment to workforce diversity, even in the face of restructuring, employee hostility, and a tough competitive environment, because top management was persuaded this course made good business sense.

Rice also refers to academic studies on the contribution of diversity to team problem solving which suggest diversity can enhance performance. Since downsizing is usually a short-term goal, while achieving diversity may be a longer term goal, the article reports that an important guideline for success on both fronts is for an organization to ensure it does not lose focus on diversity while downsizing. A few major companies managed the two challenges simultaneously by acknowledging "up front that deep-seated prejudices can emerge in the stress of downsizing" (Rice 1994). Diversity guidelines and monitoring are suggested as elements of a downsizing plan, recognizing that mid-level managers will be implementing the staff reductions.

Judy B. Rosener has studied the leadership styles of what she describes as the "second wave of effective women managers (in contrast to the first wave of women pathbreakers who, studies suggest, had to conform to the organization's success rules for men in order to succeed)" (Rosener 1990). In her study, Rosener compared the responses of female and male leaders to a survey sponsored by the International Women's Forum, and followed up by interviewing some of the female respondents. She found some unexpected similarities between the women and men (e.g., similar earnings levels), and some important differences mainly associated with the women's non-traditional leadership style and performance (which will be reviewed more fully below under The Difference Gender Makes). However, she observes that these "women's success shows that a non-traditional leadership style is well suited to the conditions of some work environments and can increase an organization's chances of surviving in an uncertain world. It supports the belief that there is strength in a diversity of leadership styles" (Rosener 1990, 120).

Within the Public Service, a study of successful senior-level female executives by Janet Lalonde, *Walking on Broken Glass*, reports these women believed they often experienced attitudinal barriers, but they noted these barriers were more difficult to define than the situational barriers they experienced earlier in their careers. Several of these women reported experiencing more barriers in recent years, which they attributed to the climate of restraint within the Public Service and the resulting lack of room for advancement (Lalonde 1993, 36).

In its first report, the Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women expressed concern that continued downsizing of government and ongoing expenditure restraint would make the attainment of gender balance in the Public Service even more difficult. "Not only are there fewer resources to devote to remedial programs, but it is also possible that managers at all levels may focus on the achievement of short-term departmental program goals, perhaps at the expense of longer term 'system' goals such as employment equity" (Canada. Consultation Group 1992, 5). The Consultation Group noted that promotions and movement within the Public Service would continue to be difficult, due to both its demographic characteristics and downsizing. "Without strategic planning and creative approaches, this could continue to present particular challenges for career development and 'bridging out' of certain occupational categories" (Canada. Consultation Group 1992, 5).

Reforms proposed by the government's initiative, Public Service 2000 — with its move away from centralized control over departmental activities toward giving managers and departments control — as well as the move to provide managers with more flexibility through providing them with operating budgets, were seen as positive influences on the system. However, the Consultation Group stressed the need for care in setting the balance of incentives under which managers operate so as to prevent the emergence of new systemic disincentives to achieving gender balance in the present climate.

Imposing Employment Equity

The *OECD Observer* article notes that employment equity in the public sector in OECD countries has been regulated mainly through central direction (Washington 1994). Canadian experience is in line with this trend. The government's commitment to achieving employment equity in the Public Service has been translated into legislation that provides the basis for central action. But also in line with trends in the new managerialism, the Canadian approach delegates the planning and implementation of employment equity actions to individual departments, within a framework of some public reporting, and with final accountability for results remaining with the centre.

Employment equity in the U.S. has been legislated to a large extent through various measures that apply to the private sector as well as to the public sector. This has led to pressures on business executives to curb discriminatory practices in corporations. As Ann M. Morrison et al (1992) report, when U.S. trends suggested the advancement of women and minorities seemed blocked, the U.S. Department of Labor launched the Glass Ceiling Commission, which reported in 1991. As a result, both the Department of Labor and Congress have taken action to regulate equal opportunity at managerial levels.

Congress also passed the controversial *Civil Rights Act 1991* to increase protection for white women and people of colour against bias in hiring, promotion, and general workplace relations. The Department of Labor released the findings of a study involving compliance reviews of nine corporations that had contracts with the federal government, which identified key barriers faced by non-traditional managers (U.S. Department of Labor 1991). The department followed up with guidelines it is enforcing through

corporate management compliance reviews, which in turn have prompted many companies to introduce their own internal monitoring systems to permit early identification of blockages in the advancement of employment equity groups.

The review of the literature clearly makes the point that, despite legislative and institutional progress, the greatest barrier to the advancement of women is attitudes that exist not just within the corporate culture, but also within mainstream society. One attitude that is having a detrimental effect on women in the workplace is the widespread perception that the doors of opportunity have already flown open for women. Because a number of legislative and institutional structures are in place, some people have the impression that all that needs to be done has been accomplished.

As Pulitzer Prize-winning American author and journalist Susan Faludi wrote in *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women*:

> Behind this celebration of...woman's victory, behind the news, cheerfully and endlessly repeated, that the struggle for women's rights are won, another message flashes. You may be free and equal now, it says to women, but you have never been so miserable (Faludi 1992, ix).

Faludi suggests that the general perception that women have attained equality has led to a male backlash that is threatening the health, wealth, and advancement of women. By the end of the 1980s, reported Faludi, women began telling pollsters that they believed they were facing an "erosion of respect." After years of saying their status had improved, the proportion of women who echoed that view had shrunk by five per cent in the late 1980s, according to the Roper Organization in the United States (Faludi 1992, xvii). The so-called backlash is also discussed in other literature and within the mainstream media, both in Canada and the United States (Rice 1994; Crawford 1993).

The Gender Equity Task Force at the Solicitor General Secretariat was also concerned about a backlash. An employee survey at the Solicitor General Secretariat "suggested that the potential for a 'gender backlash' existed" (Canada. Solicitor General 1992, 6). The Task Force noted that the women surveyed were far more likely than the men to believe that special programs were needed to break down barriers. Male respondents, on the other hand, believed that inequities would be corrected in due course through fair management practices. A third of the male respondents felt that employment equity programs had already given women an unfair advantage (Canada. Solicitor General 1992).

Judi Marshall observes that "there have recently been some surface changes in organizational life, with equal-opportunities legislation and initiatives. But women's acceptance in employment seems 'stalled'....People are puzzled by this lack of 'progress' (Marshall 1993, 92). Marshall (and others also) suggests "that change has seldom reached the deep structural levels that underpin organizational cultures. The male domination of cultures therefore goes largely unrecognized by organizational members" (Marshall 1993, 92-3).

In "The Rules of Public Engagement," authors Daniel Yankelovich and John Immerwahr help us understand the indifference or hostility that can be generated by top-down or otherwise imposed changes on fundamental issues that shape people's lives, such as fairness and equal opportunity (1993). They examine factors to consider in striking a balance between imposing change on people, compared to engaging them in such a way that they internalize and personally choose to accept the need for change. Fundamental change is difficult, they point out, often full of backsliding, procrastination and avoidance, as people struggle with the conflicts, ambivalence, defences, and other emotions that change can arouse.

In another paper Yankelovich notes that "our society is not well equipped with the institutions or knowledge it needs to expedite working through [in a collective way, the understanding of the need for, and the acceptance and adoption of, fundamental changes in attitudes]; our culture does not understand it very well and, by and large, does not do a good job with it" (1991, 65). Yankelovich and Immerwahr outline how public opinion remains superficial and volatile until there has been enough time and leadership for a period of consciousness-raising, and enough incentive to embark on the difficult work of facing up to the need for change on deeply held views. Empirical research shows that while people "form a resolution first in their heads, it takes a while for their hearts and consciences to catch up" (Yankelovich and Immerwahr 1993, 15). Citing the example of women in the military, the authors say that polls show three-quarters of Americans have intellectually accepted combat roles for qualified women, but that it is far from clear they have emotionally accepted the full consequences. The authors observe that it will take time and continuing leadership if most Americans are to work through and accept such new realities.

These findings suggest the scope for misunderstanding, unwarranted expectations and fears on the issue of bringing about workplace equity for women. The literature suggests that, given the complexity of the issue, there is no clearcut answer as to what approach or mix of approaches works best. Selecting the best approach is situational and is made more difficult because of the continually evolving environment, so that what appears effective at one time may no longer work within a few years.

In a general way, measures that address obstacles women face in the workplace can be characterized either as:

- Directed at rooting out discriminatory practices and rules, *or* as aimed at facilitating the introduction of equality-producing remedies.

- Imposed and regulatory in nature, suggestive guidelines, *or* persuasive incentives.

- Developed "external" to the workplace, *or* developed by the organization itself.

- Prescriptive in detail, *or* expressed as results sought, as targets.

Billing and Alvesson (1994) stress the need for "a greater sensitivity for contradictions and ambiguities" when it comes to determining the best approach to take since the situation itself may contain "quite different and even contradictory elements."

For example, the more the cultural characteristics of the dominant group are those of one of the traditional male models (e.g., patriarchal, competitive), the greater the risk of prejudices and stereotypes that allow gender discrimination to occur, the more likely are roles and occupations divided along gender lines. Efforts to change this situation will be affected by the extent to which the organization's culture aligns with the attitudes and values found more broadly in society. Change will also depend on how deeply anchored this socialization is in the identities of the women and men affected within the organization. Moreover, some in a workplace may have traditional attitudes about gender roles, whereas others may not.

Billing and Alvesson (1994) suggest that measures to root out discriminatory practices have been most often used to date, whereas the development of facilitating strategies that produce gender equality (such as mentoring programs for women) have been neglected, relative to their possibilities for success. Even practising gender-neutral approaches such as those genuinely based on merit would improve opportunities for women.

Technological Changes

Technological and economic changes are profoundly affecting the Canadian workplace with a shift to knowledge-based activities and the development of new ways of working more effectively. These changes are leading to increasing emphasis on continuous learning, new jobs in technological fields, restructuring of work, and the elimination of outdated jobs. Consequently, there are unique opportunities and challenges for women in the workplace.

A major concern is the risk that many Canadian women may miss out on these opportunities. In considering these technological and economic realities, the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre (CLMPC) in *Women and Economic Restructuring* flags the need "to address attitudinal and cultural barriers to women's full economic participation, which may not disappear without a real paradigm shift...but the pace of change in this area appears to be glacial in comparison to changes in technology, patterns of trade and industrial organization" (CLMPC 1994, 19).

Another study, *Tapping Our Potential: Technicians and Technologists of Tomorrow*, concludes that for Canada "the challenge of tapping our human potential will be the key measure of national success and long-term economic stability" and "the need for higher levels of technical literacy throughout the workforce will become critical" (Study Group 1993, 25-26). The study found that fewer than 10 per cent of technicians and technologists in Canada were women and that 35 per cent of the women in the survey pointed to gender bias as a barrier to advancing in their career (20).

This report notes that "once in the field, female technicians and technologists are concentrated at the low end of the scale in terms of responsibility on the job; and men are three times more likely than women with equivalent credentials and experience to occupy positions at the managerial or executive level" (13). On the job, "many women found they had to prove themselves with every new person and every new situation they faced in the course of a day's work" (15).

The report further "confirmed that gender bias was a severe problem for women contemplating careers in these fields" (13) and also confirmed the findings of the 1992 report of the International Adjustment Service Committee on Women in Engineering, *More Than Just Numbers*, which identified a number of systemic and cultural barriers to women's careers in engineering" (15). The CLMPC study comments that "the dearth of women in these fields is both an economic and equity issue" (14). It was concerned that Canada might squander the potential contribution of over half of our workforce or ignore the varied perspectives which women might bring to technological problems and technology adaptation" (14).

A practical example of how attitudes can cause the "gendered division of labour" to continue even as women move into technologically advanced fields previously stereotyped as masculine, is cited by Billing and Alvesson (1994, 235). When the representation of women in engineering programs at one technical university increased significantly in chemistry, the students in mechanics and electronics, most of them male, renamed the chemistry program as the "kitchen" course. The authors describe this gender-specific label as "a way of marginalizing and degrading this specific course."

Kanter, recognizing the possibilities for women in new, fast-changing high-tech fields, also writes about the problems women can face. For example, "entering otherwise high opportunity environments by the 'wrong route'...via a non-technical education — can cause sidetracking" (Kanter 1987b, 16). She notes too that the informality of these environments "puts more reliance on the network of peers for communication and power, and women can have more trouble breaking into male-dominated technical peer groups."

The 1992 final report of the Gender Equity Task Force at the Solicitor General Secretariat included a report prepared by its Gender Equity and Technology Working Group. The Working Group's report focused on the implications for gender equity of the implementation and continuing enhancement of technology in the workplace, starting with administrative support positions (Canada. Solicitor General 1992).

The Working Group was quick to point out that since women dominate the administrative support category, "the effects of automation, whether positive or negative, entail gender equity implications" (Canada. Solicitor General 1992, 3). While there has been some speculation that continuing automation might lead to the elimination of some support staff positions, in reviewing the department's personnel data from 1987-1991, the Working Group found that this had not been the case at the Solicitor General Secretariat. The Group found that automation, instead of eliminating jobs, was changing the nature of

administrative support work (5). One of the most positive findings for women in administrative support was that technological innovation allowed them to take on other tasks that involved decision-making responsibilities (5).

The report concluded by encouraging the Solicitor General Secretariat to: ..".apprise central agencies...about the impact of technology on gender equity concerns and the need to facilitate the career development of support personnel" (10).

Tapping Our Potential implies that one area of job growth for those now in administrative support positions may be that of technicians and technologists — traditionally largely male-dominated occupations. Projections suggest a potential moderate shortage of supply in this growth field by the year 2005. Apart from new graduates, the report suggests that acting now through in-house training or retraining of people currently employed in other occupations constitutes another source of supply that could balance supply and demand over the projection period (Study Group 1993, 7-8).

The need for adequate lead time is also implicit in *Tapping Our Potential*'s recommendations. The report urges that partnerships be developed among governments, educators, and employers to develop bridging programs for women to receive skills training for careers as technicians and technologists. This recognizes a lack of educational preparation for women in this area — women still tend to prepare themselves for jobs that are considered jobs for women and so limit their future options. Studies suggest that it is necessary to counter gender bias in technology fields and make workplaces and college environments more accommodating to women returning to school or contemplating a career change.

Organizations That Perform Well

The literature review examined the characteristics of "organizations that perform well" in the environment of unrelenting pressure to restructure, downsize, and adapt to major changes, including new technology and legislated requirements on employment equity. Particular attention was given to the opportunities and risks for women in organizations making this transformation.

Kanter has written extensively on this subject. In her article, "Forging Ahead," she describes a new organizational model called "post-entrepreneurial" that is emerging. These organizations are focused, fast, flexible, and friendly, and recognize that success rests on the abilities and attitudes of their employees (Kanter 1990b). In "Mastering Change," she describes the ingredients for successful organizational transformations (Kanter 1993a). The transition must be guided by "change masters," top managers who are skilled in the art of managing change. To master change, people need a culture that is flexible, builds on competence, and encourages partnerships (including employee involvement), integration, and innovation.

In considering the implications for women of organizational changes to improve productivity and quality, Kanter noted in "Men and Women of the Corporation Revisited" that organizations that respond to these challenges have opened up mobility channels and empowered more of their workforce — both female and male (1987b). The resulting increased use of task forces and problem-solving teams has helped break down the barriers that blocked earlier opportunities, so that it has become easier "for competence to prevail over status, and for people in otherwise 'invisible' jobs to stretch and show off their skills" (14).

Kanter observes, too, that women's representation in some lower- and middle-management ranks has increased from token status to minority status — a better position because it permits collective action: where one woman would not have dared speak up, the group feels freer to do so (Kanter 1987b, 15). The position of women has also been strengthened by their formation of work-related networks. But Kanter notes that women "still have not penetrated the 'glass ceiling' keeping them out of the highest positions." She also warns that "as old barriers are knocked down, new ones appear" (16). She suggests, for example, that the fact that the new management practices "take more time and absorb more energy" can be a problem for some women as long as they carry a disproportionate share of family responsibilities.

In their analysis of workplace and social attitudes about the "genderedness" of various occupations, Billing and Alvesson note that superiority in organizations "is clearly associated with masculinity (1994, 237). The higher the level in organizations, the stronger this 'aura' becomes." They acknowledge that "the 'genderedness' of managerial jobs — is (slowly) 'reconfiguring' as a consequence of an increase in the number of female managers and as a result of general cultural changes in society away from the old, authoritarian patriarchal bosses, but at present — and in the foreseeable future — the higher managerial positions are in most organizations associated with 'masculinity'."

In *The Female Advantage*, Sally Helgesen (1990) writes about how innovative organizations have changed. The hierarchical structure has given way to less formal, more flexible structures that permit fast-paced information exchange, a broader perspective, and more creativity. Authoritarianism is yielding to a networking style. Her studies of the styles exhibited by top female leaders in the workplace (which are reported in more detail in the Section called "Women Managers") found that the values underlying the management style of these women were well-suited to the new environment, and contrasted sharply with more traditional management values. Helgesen believes that key elements of the different value system these women displayed derived from their socialization as women. For example, from her findings, she suggests that the "big picture" perspective these women maintained stemmed from their efforts to achieve balance between their work and family lives, which in turn made them well-integrated individuals, in a way not seen in high-performing traditional men. Similarly, these women showed greater tolerance for the flexible work structures and shifting priorities typical in the modern workplace, and, in her view, so reflect the capacity for responsiveness and flexibility generally instilled in most women as a result of their gender formation.

Cultural and Attitudinal Barriers to Women in the Workplace

The Difference Gender Makes

This section surveys literature on "gender" and the workplace with attention to gender conditioning, gender differences, gender stereotypes, and other gendered attributions, compared to the difference the sex of an individual makes in their workplace abilities. This includes findings on the effect gender cultures and subcultures have on shaping traditional workplace cultures and attitudes. It also considers the possible effect gender influences might have on the approach an individual takes to work.

Billing and Alvesson note that extensive documentation shows "that women and men do not differ with regard to personal characteristics, abilities, talents, etc. and at the same time it seems that there is a clear difference as to how their talents are utilized in their working life" (1994, 73). Kanter, in her update (1987b, 14) of her earlier studies of the determinants of career success for both men and women, found that, "with ten years of change in corporate America and ten years of experience with new roles for men and women," her major conclusions still held:

> Productivity, motivation, and career success...were determined largely by organizational structure and the nature of the social circumstances in which people found themselves. Thus, observed differences in the behavior — and success — of women and men had more to do with what they were handed by the organization than with inherent differences in ability or drive. When women and men were dealt similar cards and given similar places in the corporate game, they behaved in similar ways. The problem, though, was that men and women rarely were dealt similar cards (Kanter 1987b, 14).

Kanter attributed this situation to two major causes:

> First, a set of sex-typed images defined who could appropriately be a manager — in part because managers themselves were surrounded by subordinate female support systems in the office and at home. Second, women tended to be concentrated in the jobs with lower opportunity for advancement, to have less access to power, and — when they did enter upper levels — to be represented in such small numbers that they had the special status of "tokens." "Tokens" who suffered from the effects of difference..." (1987b, 14).

Deborah Kolb points out that "discussions of gender difference always resonate with some but fail to fit the experiences of others" (1992, 6). In *Is It Her Voice or Her Place That Makes a Difference?*, she describes the issue as being "whether we are talking about essential differences between men and women traceable to biology, development, and/or social roles or whether what we observe is a function of the differential power relationships between men and women." She notes that "sex" is a biological attribute that tends to be stable, whereas "gender" is "a social construct" (1). How gender is

displayed is generally regarded as learned behaviour that is influenced by family, race, class, culture, social roles, and other factors that can vary in intensity, and over time, in their influence.

Billing and Alvesson in their discussion of gender make further distinctions (1994, 34-37, 228-239). They describe culture "as pointing to collectively shared patterns of meanings, values, assumptions and expectations that guide perceptions, cognitions and emotions." Culture "creates and guides a collective, subjective logic which forms the unspoken, often unconscious subtext of social life" (34). They note that while stereotyped views:

> Can have very limiting effects on both women and men...Roles are normative, however, and therefore historically changeable, thus the expectations of women and the role of women today differ from those of 30 years ago. What was not earlier questioned in life is now being debated...If the problem is that of different attitudes to girls and boys, and women and men, an attempt can be made to influence these attitudes (36).

Not only do cultures themselves evolve and change, individuals can be influenced by many "cultures" and other factors that may shape and change attitudes.

Billing and Alvesson report that psychoanalysts suggest the observable differences in gender cultures are rooted, at least in part, in the need of males in shaping their identity, to separate from their mothers and thereby confirm their physical difference (1994, 41 42). In contrast, females' identity is built on confirming their sameness with their mothers through forming a nuanced relationship with them that facilitates association and modelling. Under this theory, these fundamental differences encourage autonomy in males and relationship-building by females. Males will be threatened by intimacy and females by being singled out or isolated (individuation). Billing and Alvesson acknowledge that this theory permits some insights into observable and expected behaviour differences in gender cultures. They also recognize that this theory can be criticized for not making sufficient allowance for the influence of a wide variety of other formative factors (such as inborn traits, access to power, the demands of sheer physical survival) that could override or displace the impact of this one factor and explain why many women and men do not fit the expected gender models flowing from this or other theories.

In her examination of ways in which women might bring a different *voice* to work-related negotiations, Kolb considers how the different experiences of women and men might "account for differences at an aggregate, but not necessarily individual level" (Ferguson 1984 in Kolb 1992, 2). She notes that possible differences could be linked to how a negotiation is regarded. Men tend to regard it as a contest or competition while women see it as an opportunity to build relationships or community. Kolb states that, from feminist studies alerting us to the distinctions between how women and men in general comprehend and interpret their environments, one can say that:

> The male imagination stereotypically focuses on individual achievement and is sparked by opportunities for distinctive activity that are bound by task and structure. Women understand events contextually both in terms

of their impact on ongoing relationships and as passing frames in evolving situations which grow out of a past and are still to be shaped in the future (Kolb 1992, 3).

From another perspective, Kolb suggests that gender-related differences in negotiations might result from stereotypical assumptions made by other players in the negotiation, such as how legitimacy is established, and how elements of the negotiation process (i.e., power, communications, conflict, and rituals) should be handled. She also considers the possible impact of factors such as the phenomenon identified in Kanter's classic study of what occurred when a single male was added to an organization of women, compared to the reverse situation of adding a female to an organization of men. The results were asymmetrical (the lone men's "superior" status resulted in positive experiences for them, in contrast to the obstacles the lone women faced). Kolb observes that gender stereotypes can make a difference for women generally; sometimes they are advantageous, sometimes they are not.

In examining "feminine principles" in the workplace, Helgesen looks at what is instilled in players of children's games (Helgesen 1990). She cites Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*, which shows that, in what are known as boys' games, such as football and war, the players "learn to put winning ahead of personal relationships or growth; to feel comfortable with rules, boundaries and procedures" (Helgesen 1990, 38). In contrast, girls' games, such as playing house and jump rope, emphasize cooperation over competition and have simple and fluid rules that participants may reformulate as desired" (37). The players learn improvisational skills and "to value cooperation and relationships; to disdain complex rules and authoritarian structures" (38). She suggests that "these feminine principles had little chance for influence in the days when corporations were still 'strictly male-cloning productions'." But now that corporations are facing new realities and "reinventing themselves to accommodate a wider focus, to foster creativity and nurture new ideas — simply in order to survive," they are "finding common ground with the values that women have been raised and socialized to hold," and that are being practised by both effective women and men in these workplaces (39). What Helgesen refers to as "the female advantage" is thus a competitive advantage in the workplace for those women and men who employ what might be regarded as traditional feminine principles and practices.

Billing and Alvesson analyse sources of gender images and other gendered aspects of organizations (1994, 228-233). They stress the importance of not reducing organizational arrangements to a function of gender relations, but note this is difficult because of "a fusion of the economic and political system and the social characteristics of its dominant group...a masculine type." Although organizational patterns may be attributed partly to developments such as industrialization, technological, and capitalistic rationality, "men were and are the carriers" (231) of these developments and "most contemporary organizations, and especially those which are the economically and politically most significant...have men as their architects and heads" (230).

Billing and Alvesson ask whether organizations therefore bear the imprints of "maleness — as a set of ideals, principles and objectives," or of a particular class of men, or of certain men (1994, 230). Citing other research, they observe the variants of "masculinity" reflected in workplace cultures and structures, some examples being "paternalistic masculinity," "competitive masculinity," military and macho models, "technocracy," "shop floor culture," impersonal upper class masculinity, "hard" masculinity, and "soft" masculinity (as stereotyped in creative fields in the fashion, entertainment, and advertising industries), and suggest that each may have different implications for workplace relations between the sexes (1994, 231-232).

Barriers to Women in the Workplace

This section reviews findings from other studies on the specific nature of barriers that women face in the workplace. For the most part, these barriers stem from attitudes that are linked to traditional values and stereotypes about women, and to traditional organizational structuring of work along gendered lines.

In her OECD report on the employment situation of women in the 21 OECD countries, Françoise Coré observes that "gender-based job segregation remains solidly anchored in all countries" (1994, 5). In listing the ten occupations in each country that respectively employ the largest numbers of women and men, she observes the dominance of gendered job segregation, with virtually no overlap between the lists by gender. Similar job allocations by sex, whatever the country, are strongly evident, and women remain relatively disadvantaged in public sector employment despite the progress towards equal opportunity (1994, 8).

In *New Solutions to the Same Old Glass Ceiling*, Ann Morrison reports on the results of her study of 16 U.S.-based organizations that were the most progressive in terms of integrating women and visible minorities into their senior management ranks (1992). The study identified 21 workplace barriers to "non-traditional managers" (i.e., women and visible minorities), of which six appeared to be most instrumental in blocking advancement. Prejudice was identified as the most prevalent barrier. "Many white men and others still assume that non-traditional managers are less competent or less suitable for leadership positions than white men. Negative sex-role stereotypes continue to limit women today" (Morrison 1992, 15).

Morrison's study found that lack of attention and guidance early in their careers was the second most important barrier non-traditional employees experienced. "The accumulated effect of losing developmental opportunities over time keeps them from qualifying for high-level jobs" (16). The members of this group also face "a lonely, hostile, unsupportive working environment" (15), including double standards that work against them, lack of mentors and the lack of insider savvy and understanding of how to play the game and get ahead in the organization. They also lack the "comfort factor" due to exclusion from business and social activities shared among the traditional managers. Finally for women, the struggle to reconcile home and work responsibilities is still largely regarded as women's problem and not the organization's. Morrison notes that this catalogue of barriers was much the same in 1992 as it was in the 1980s.

Kanter observes in *Men and Women: Equal Partners?* that the best companies for women and minorities are those that devote resources and attention to team-building — through training, providing effective communication tools that bridge diversity, and encouraging project clusters that make people interdependent (1993b).

Beyond Hierarchy observed that "both managers and employees emphasized that the toughest job to tackle is that of attitudinal change," noting that managers must "walk the talk" (Green 1993, 7).

There are few recent Canadian studies of private sector attitudes to women in the workplace. One comprehensive study conducted by the Bank of Montreal's Task Force for the Advancement of Women found that attitudinal barriers were just as prevalent in the bank's case as was found in the public sector in *Beneath the Veneer* (Bank of Montreal 1991). Bank of Montreal President F. Anthony Comper suggested that a major barrier to the advancement of women is

> A combination of outdated assumptions and false impressions: No matter
> how wrong they are, these assumptions and impressions have become
> conventional "wisdom" — severely limiting men's expectations of what
> women can achieve and, too often, what women expect of themselves"
> (Bank of Montreal 1991, 4).

Women make up 91 per cent of all non-management positions within the bank, yet only 9 per cent are at the executive level. The Task Force identified a number of barriers to women's advancement including:

- Outdated assumptions and false impressions.

- Not providing women with the kind of encouragement, access to opportunities
  — or even information — they need to achieve their full potential.
  Complicating the problem is the fact that, while most male bankers believe
  women have equal opportunities for advancement, female bankers do not see it
  that way, especially those at the more senior level.

- When employees respond to commitments outside the workplace — to family,
  education, and community — their commitment to career is questioned and
  their opportunities for advancement are restricted.

Survey respondents, both female and male, were asked why women were not "getting ahead" at the bank. The Task Force compared the assumptions and the attitudes that respondents expressed to the actual situations in the workplace. Some respondents assumed, for example, that women at the bank were less committed to their careers because they had babies and subsequently left the bank when their children were young. In reality, however, it was found that while women did indeed have babies, they had longer service records than male employees of the Bank of Montreal at every level except for senior management. Respondents also assumed that female employees had less

education than male employees, thus inhibiting women's ability to rise. It was discovered, though, that in the prime feeder routes to more senior positions more women than men had university degrees.

Women and men at the bank also differed in their opinions of opportunities available to women. A majority of men, including the majority of male managers, believed that women have the same opportunities as men. Only one-third of female senior managers agreed with this statement. Almost half of the men agreed that men have better access to high profile jobs. A total of three-quarters of women said men had the advantage. The majority of men and women said many managers look on some jobs as "male" and others as "female." Although one-third of female senior managers believed that women's access to opportunities is restricted, only two per cent of male senior managers agreed with this statement.

The higher women rose in the ranks, the less likely they were to think that executives were good role models in support of equal opportunity for women, whereas the opposite was true of men's views. Over half of the women and men in non-management positions viewed senior executives as such role models. Just over one-third of women in senior management saw them as such role models, compared to two-thirds of men in senior management who did so.

Female Managers

Much of the recent literature on women in the workplace focuses on female managers. It reflects a view that achieving gender equity reform necessitates a better understanding of how women access positions of formal influence and power within organizations. At the same time, this body of work provides a better understanding of organizational dynamics as they affect women generally, and of the characteristics of successful women. It also offers insights applicable to other occupational groups that exclude women (i.e., non-traditional jobs).

Typically, the literature examines why women succeed, not only as managers, but also in breaking into workplace roles that were traditionally held by men. Several of the studies consider whether there are significant differences in the management styles of women compared to men.

The research generally recognizes that both "gender style" and "good management" are complex concepts that are value-based, situational, evolving, and meaningful only in relation to a larger socio-economic context. Where differences are observed in the management styles of women compared to men, some studies also ask whether these differences provide effective new models for contemporary management challenges. The following works are illustrative.

Lisa A. Mainiero interviewed 55 high-profile executive women with the goal of identifying the critical success factors. She found that these women had earned the same respect as their male counterparts. They were talented and entrepreneurial, they made tough business decisions, they demonstrated they could effectively manage major line

operations, they attracted top level support, and they avoided alienating those whose support they most needed — their employees. But the ingredient identified as most critical to their success was their "political seasoning," leading to the development of their subtle and sophisticated "political savvy" which greatly enhanced their effectiveness (Mainiero 1994a).

Many of these women were blunt and truthful, typically non-conformist, and claimed to be "apolitical." Yet the interviews showed that their career success had been determined by their capacity to survive and learn from initial political blunders, understand their corporate culture and values, be tough and direct where necessary, take risks and build credibility, as well as build alliances and interpersonal networks. Their capacity to do this was partly rooted in their ability to lead despite not being given formal authority, effective and timely mentoring, and continuity with their organization (Mainiero 1994a).

In a different approach, Helgesen carried out an in-depth study of the actual day-to-day management practices and thinking of a small number of women who were successful top level leaders. Her objective was to identify common patterns, and to compare them with those of the "archetypal 'organization man'" in the traditional large corporation (1990).

Helgesen used the methodology and findings from Henry Mintzberg's 1968 landmark "diary studies" of five top level corporate leaders, *The Nature of Managerial Work*, (1973). Mintzberg's study provided an important benchmark of the behaviour and values of leaders of large traditional organizations (who, consistent with the era, were men). For her purposes, Helgesen specifically chose female leaders who operated in an environment where they had a relatively free hand in setting policies and direction, either as entrepreneurs who headed their own companies or worked in areas where they were well established.

As Helgesen reports, the men in Mintzberg's study were immersed in their work, they identified with their jobs, and severely curtailed family time. They worked hard, were action-oriented, with little time for reflection, achieving their goals through continual personal encounters in an environment characterized by interruption, discontinuity, fragmentation, and crisis. They actively maintained a complex network of relationships outside the organization for work-related purposes. Mintzberg considered their chief weakness, from both an organizational and personal perspective, to be their tendency to hoard information, causing organizational bottlenecks and a reliance on hierarchy, and a prime cause of their overburdened workloads. Also problematic was their inability to detach themselves from their work role, and their intellectual narrowness. These highly successful men were "hugely fulfilled." They were satisfied with their work, took pleasure in their accomplishments, and enjoyed the high status they had achieved (Helgesen 1990, 10-15).

The principal differences Helgesen found in the pattern among the female leaders were that the women were not impersonal, they were caring, involved, and concerned about "keeping relations in the organization in good repair," paying great attention to the processes for getting work done. They shared information as much as possible and saw "their own identities as complex and multi-faceted" and "themselves as being in the center

of things rather than at the top." They consistently made time for their families and for broadening their knowledge, and they constantly maintained a long-term focus and a big-picture perspective (Helgesen 1990, 19-28).

Helgesen notes the reasons underlying these differences are complex. The women faced different management challenges and were operating in a different era than Mintzberg's men. Greater conformity to organizational norms was expected of the men. Recent studies continue to show that many men leading today's large organizations sacrifice their family life, but that now they generally reflect the broader outlook demanded in the current environment. Evidence from studies by the Center for Values Research in Dallas shows that:

> Top women managers are more likely to be...able to reconcile a concern
> for bottom-line results with a concern for people...because a fiercer
> weeding-out process takes place among women managers; those who do
> survive must be the very best...Also...co-workers tend to be more hostile
> and negative toward women managers who lack human relations skills,
> which prevents women not strong in these skills from reaching positions of
> authority and influence (Helgesen 1990, 31).

Nevertheless, in her examination of the reasons the women gave for the aspects of their management styles that differed from those of the men in Mintzberg's study, Helgesen found these differences were principally rooted in "the values that women have been raised and socialized to hold." She observes, based on current management literature, that these values and practices are precisely "what business needs now" as corporations reinvent themselves to meet current challenges. She suggests "the confluence is fortunate, an alignment that gives women unique opportunities in the workplace — 'by expressing, not by giving up, their personal values'" (Helgesen 1990, 39-40).

Helgesen's conclusion is shared by Rosener who found that:

> Women managers who have broken the glass ceiling in medium-sized,
> non-traditional organizations...have demonstrated that using the
> command-and-control style of managing others, a style generally
> associated with men in large, traditional organizations, is not the only way
> to succeed. The first female executives, because they were breaking new
> ground, adhered to many of the "rules of conduct" that spelled success for
> men. Now a second wave of women is making its way into top
> management, not by adopting the style and habits that have proved
> successful for men but by drawing on the skills and attitudes they
> developed from their shared experience as women (Rosener 1990, 119).

As noted previously, Rosener's findings stem from a survey of female leaders who are members of the International Women's Forum and "matching" men identified by the female respondents as being in similar positions. Rosener interviewed some of the female participants who exhibited this new management style. She found that the men were more likely than the women to describe their style in a way that management experts

characterize as the traditional "transactional" management style whereby subordinates receive rewards for services rendered and punishment for inadequate performance. The men were also more likely to use power that comes from their organizational position and formal authority. In contrast, the women were more likely to describe themselves in ways characterized as "transformational" leaders — whereby subordinates transform their self-interest into the interest of the group in a broader goal. The women also relied on personal power such as interpersonal skills and hard work compared to organizational stature.

As a result of the interview process, Rosener developed the phrase "interactive leadership" to describe the style these women were using. They encouraged inclusion through participation, shared power and information, and enhanced other people's self-worth, using "win-win" approaches. The participants were comfortable using a variety of management styles, depending on the situation, but indicated a preference for a participatory approach.

Rosener attributes these findings to women's "socialization and the career paths they have chosen." These reflect "experiences that differed *because* of gender," such as the expectation that as women they would play supportive roles whereas men expected to be in control. Women's career opportunities were also more limited, so that these future female leaders often had to achieve objectives from support positions without formal authority. They gained the conviction that their style is effective and beneficial to their organizations. Even with "formal authority and control over vast resources...they see sharing power and information as an asset rather than a liability" (Rosener 1990, 124).

Rosener's study found that most of the women interviewed were in medium-sized organizations experiencing fast change, where the focus was on results that gave them an important break. She observes that this finding suggests that in an environment of rapid change, interactive leadership "may emerge as the management style of choice for many organizations," and points out this style is not directly linked to gender. She notes that many women have succeeded by using more traditional models, wielding "power in ways similar to men," and that as her survey findings showed, some men use the transformational leadership style. She observes: "Large, established organizations should expand their definition of effective leadership." She suggests that by valuing a diversity of leadership styles, organizations strengthen their capacity to survive and increase the likelihood the glass ceiling will disappear (1990, 125).

From her study of women who had reached the senior-most levels of the Public Service, Janet Lalonde had similar findings (1993, 30-31). Among the senior-level women she interviewed, one-half "felt there was no difference in the management style or leadership profile between male and female managers," believing that the range of management styles exhibited by managers was not gender-related (30). Among those who believed there were differences, most cited the area of interpersonal relations as a result of women's traditional socialization that "rewarded...nurturing, supportive, and consensus-building behaviours." Most of this group also suggested that women's leadership styles were more inclusive, power-sharing, focused on empowerment and creating a vision. Several also suggested women were stronger communicators, better able to instill commitment, and more adept at strategic thinking. A few suggested that women showed less self-confidence than men.

These women suggested that to succeed, they had had to work harder than their male counterparts, and had faced tougher standards and greater barriers in progressing. The discussion under Double Standards that follows later supports this suggestion.

In the Canadian private sector, the majority of women who reach managerial status tend to do so by owning their own companies. However, these women also face significant barriers, according to *The Glass Box: Women Business Owners in Canada*, a study published by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (Belcourt et al. 1991). The study identifies a host of obstacles that women in business must overcome including discrimination from creditors, governments, and even their own staff.

More Than a Pipeline Problem

As Deborah Tannen notes, many earnest executives believe that achieving gender equity in the workplace is "only a pipeline problem" (Tannen 1994, 133). They believe that by recruiting competent women in sufficient numbers, it would only be a matter of time for them to work their way up, with some eventually reaching the top. But the experience of many organizations that pursued this approach shows that this logic is flawed. These organizations are finding that after years into their affirmative action plans, they have few results to show. The women are stuck at mid-management levels or have left the organization. This phenomenon is "sometimes referred to as the glass ceiling: an invisible barrier that seems to keep women from rising to the top." Tannen observes that in 1991 in the United States the problem was "considered so widespread and serious that a Glass Ceiling Commission was created" under the Secretary of Labor. Tannen has documented a myriad of obstacles women face in the workplace on account of their conversational style alone, which can lead to difficulties in having their competence and contribution fairly recognized in comparison with that of male colleagues. (A discussion on communication follows later.)

Morrison also describes the misguided expectations of the pipeline phenomenon (1992). She notes that some executives have come to understand that development of non-traditional employees must be managed rather than assumed. She suggests that in U.S. organizations "the poor representation levels of women and non-traditional managers in general may well be the result of several major barriers that constitute today's glass ceiling. Even in the progressive organizations we studied, the barriers are formidable" (1992, 15).

Rosabeth Moss Kanter observes that "Demographics are on the side of women...But the transition problems I have identified show that increasing the numbers who enter does not ensure success" (1993b, 9). The problems she identifies are twofold. The first occurs once the number of women and non-traditional employees in traditional white male preserves increase beyond the level of tokenism. leading to increasing tension. discomfort with diversity, a greater risk of backlash, and harassment — if not effectively managed. This means, for example, that women still have to work harder to become accepted as team members. The second problem she describes is the "comfort factor," in reality, the

lack of comfort experienced in choosing someone "different," particularly for high risk positions such as leadership positions. The persistent problem for women and minorities is to find someone to take a chance on them.

Kanter points out that these phenomena are most likely to occur in organizations with difficulties in managing relationships. She notes: "It is not surprising, then, that the companies that are 'best' for women and minorities are those that devote resources and attention to team-building," and that organizations "take giant leaps forward in managing diversity when they also build competence at managing teams" (1993b, 9). This enables people to see each other as individuals rather than as members of diverse groups and to better use their talents.

Billing and Alvesson have also considered this problem and some of its causes (1994, 234-239). They observe that "merely increasing the number of women in an organization will not make much change in gender relations in the organization." As long as traditional attitudes, values, and patterns remain unchanged about stereotypes and suitable roles for a group, increasing the representation of that group will only change the former slowly, and not always in the direction of greater acceptance. Thus it is easier to increase women's representation in the workplace so that women can be channelled into traditional occupations and kept at lower levels. It can be expected that increasing the numbers of women may also gradually lead to streaming them into occupational groups in reverse order of the status of occupations, as described more fully in Segregation, Underemployment, and Channelling.

Symptoms of Cultural and Attitudinal Barriers to Women at Work

Double Standards

Double standards for women are well documented in the literature. A number of studies have shown that women have had to work harder, perform to higher levels, and fulfil higher expectations than men before they progress in the workplace. These double standards can translate into discriminatory behaviours. When organizations act to address double standards and discrimination, men sometimes see women as having unfair advantages.

Women may be judged not only by the standard executive skills, they may also be expected to conform to traditionally expected behaviour for women (e.g., not aggressive). In *Walking on Broken Glass*, Lalonde reports that 86 per cent of the senior Public Service women in her study felt that more was required of them as managers than their male counterparts and they were required to work much harder than these counterparts to satisfy expectations (Lalonde 1993, 34-35). The report also noted that behaviour acceptable for (and to) males is not regarded the same way if practised by females instead (e.g., shouting or losing one's temper). By the same token, men were seen to be allowed more latitude for error while women were rarely given the benefit of the doubt. The women also felt that their personal habits were scrutinized more closely than the men's.

In Lisa Mainiero's study of 55 high-profile executive women, many of the women commented that the willingness to work hard was a necessary ingredient of their eventual success, personifying the axiom: "Women must work twice as hard as men to succeed." They reported exceedingly long hours worked, lost weekends and vacations (Mainiero 1994a, 12).

In *The Female Advantage*, Helgesen cites studies by the Center for Values Research (CVR) in Dallas that found top female managers more likely to be what the Center characterizes as "existential" leaders — that is, leaders who are able to reconcile a concern for bottom-line results with a concern for people; who are good at both planning and communicating; and who are "reality-based," able to comprehend all the important aspects of *existence* — thus the term "existential" (1990, 31). CVR estimates that this is so because a fiercer weeding-out process takes place among female managers; those who do survive must be the very best. Also, CVR "found that co-workers tend to be more hostile and negative toward female managers who lack human relations skills, which prevents women not strong in these skills from reaching positions of authority and influence."

The "Paula Principle" to which Andrew Hede refers, is both a discriminatory barrier and an example of the double standards applied to women (Hede 1993, 6). According to the Paula Principle, men are typically assumed to be capable of performing at a level beyond that of their proven competence, whereas women tend to be promoted only *after* they have demonstrated the ability to perform at the higher level.

Ann M. Morrison, president of the New Leader Institute in San Diego, concurs with Hede's perspective. In an article in the Conference Board's *Across the Board*, Dawn Chipman writes about Morrison's research and findings. According to Morrison, a narrow background is unlikely to derail a man's career in the same way that it can a woman's. She points out how many CEOs there are who have not done much else besides finance yet are considered qualified. Morrison calls this the "faith phenomenon," i.e., He's done something well, so we have *faith* that he'll be able to do this other thing well. A woman, though, has to have done *that* well in order to be allowed to do *that*. "It's the old idea 'do the job before you get the job'," she says (Chipman 1994, 21).

Morrison also notes that the wrong image (i.e., appearance and presence) may derail a woman but rarely a man. Men have tremendous leeway in terms of physical and behavioural characteristics. She adds that her "research suggests that a female executive should be commanding, yet she's not allowed to be as commanding as a man" (Chipman 1994, 21).

There are extensive indications that cultural expectations and perceptions exist that affect the way in which the two sexes are perceived, assessed and treated. Billing and Alvesson note several studies that conclude "it is not necessarily what women do or are capable of that results in their slower progress in the enterprises, it is rather what the people who engage and promote them expect of the women that determines their career progress (e.g., Halaby, 1979; Devanna, 1987). These expectations are usually based on sex-linked behaviour" (Billing/Alvesson 1994, 61).

Billing and Alvesson observe that these differences in cultural expectations may change into more subtle discrimination. For example, they cite a study that demonstrates that men are regarded as potential leaders/managers whereas women with equal qualifications are regarded as clerical workers (Cecil et al. referred to by Forisha 1981, 21 in Billing/Alvesson 1994, 61). Another study about recruitment of college graduates for management positions found that male recruiters were interested in knowing the person's qualifications for the job when the candidate was male, but were more concerned with the person's interest in the job when the candidate was female (Dubeck referred to by Mills 1988, 362 in Billing/Alvesson 1994, 61). In the case of female candidates, the questions centred on whether the applicant was career-minded.

Different areas of organizations are seen as symbolizing gender in various ways. Billing and Alvesson report that more senior positions are normally seen as "masculine." The higher the organizational level, the stronger the positions are associated with certain "male characteristics." The more strongly a position or type of work is associated with something "typically masculine," "the more pronounced the lack of harmony becomes between a 'typical' female employee or candidate for a position and the organizational context." The authors suggest "that women will almost always lose in sex-biased evaluations, and are especially disadvantaged in the context of organizations, professions and positions that are normally associated with some form of masculinity" (Billing/Alvesson 1994, 238).

Women who assume roles previously held by men have been found to begin work with an aura of suspicion about whether they are up to the job. Tannen, in *Talking from 9 to 5*, reports on the case of a new manager, a woman, who was challenged and questioned by her subordinates more than her predecessor had been (1994, 145). Co-workers, in pressing her to justify her decisions, could translate into evidence that she lacked competence — regardless of her real abilities.

The tougher double standard for women compared to men can increase the frustration and feeling of hopelessness for many women about their opportunities in the workplace.

In the *Harvard Business Review's* Classic Case Series, Robert Schrank detailed how, almost instinctively, men in the corporate world and other male-dominated environments in effect sabotaged those women foolhardy enough to intrude (Schrank 1994). In this case Schrank reports that it was only upon serious reflection that the truth about what they had done struck home to the men. The men's self-image as protectors of women held only as long as the women conformed to the men's standards. Schrank suggests that women have fallen short of their goal of crashing through the glass ceiling because they have underestimated the male need to maintain power. He feels that the "unconscious activity" of males is allowing them to maintain their power stronghold in many organizations. He argues that there needs to be a shift in that power before more women move into management positions (76). "We need to understand more about what motivates the behavior that lies underneath our surface actions and intentions. Not so that we can justify it, but so that we can change it" (78).

The Schrank article includes several commentaries on the case. In one, Faith Wohl, a senior manager, observes that this sabotage, whether conscious or not, is "what happens when managers fail to create the environment in which a diverse team can achieve trust and mutual respect" and "when management fails to address critical human resource issues in...today's business climate" (Schrank 1994, 78).

Studies suggest that "discrimination against women at work has not been eliminated, but rather has gone underground and is still flourishing beneath a veneer of political correctness" (Hede 1993, 8). As much as some would like to believe that female managers are interacting on a level playing field, discrimination is still very prevalent in many organizations. Some traditional managers have learned all the proper terminology, but when it comes to taking action, they revert to their habitual forms of selection and screening. For example, where relevant information is not immediately available, gender is used as a basis for discrimination in hiring and promoting. Nina Colwill suggests that "as long as a general bias against women prevails in our organizations, individual decisions will continue to be biased toward men (Nieva and Gutek 1981) and men will continue to gain power at the expense of women" (Colwill 1993, 79).

On the issue of female managers obtaining power in an organization, Nina Colwill suggests this is not so straightforward as it might seem due to gender-related factors. She observes that "the lack of women in management is an issue, not of education and training, but of power" (Colwill 1993, 81). She explores three types of individual power which she describes as follows:

- *Personal* power: feeling in control of one's environment

- *Interpersonal* power: inherent influence on others

- *Organizational* power: the ability to mobilize resources, to obtain results

Female and male managers do not seem to differ in *personal* power — this is attributed to the fact that female managers demonstrate personality characteristics similar to those of male managers. In the area of *interpersonal* power, the evidence suggests women are inherently less influential: female managers command significantly less pay, move up the organizational ladder more slowly, and are offered fewer training opportunities — reflecting the inferior status and lesser value generally attached to women compared to men, regardless of a woman's actual abilities.

In the area of *organizational* power women are reported as being more effective than men. The discrepancy here is an obvious one: women have greater ability to mobilize resources and obtain results than do men, in a world in which women's access to organizational resources (Stewart and Gudykunst 1982) and inherent power to influence is more limited than that of their male counterparts (Colwill 1993, 81).

In terms of employment equity programs, over half the men who responded to the *Beneath the Veneer* study expressed the view that such programs gave women an "unfair advantage." This view was particularly prevalent among men in management and senior level jobs. The majority of men (59 per cent) in senior level jobs believed that

employment equity had placed women in jobs "beyond their expertise and training." Most women did not agree. The greater the seniority of the woman, the more likely it was that she disagreed with the idea that employment equity put women beyond their depth (Canada. Task Force 1990, I:54).

These views continue to exist in the Public Service. For example, the Gender Equity Task Force at the Solicitor General Secretariat found that about half the men in that department supported special programs to benefit women, while three-quarters of the women supported them. However, the study also found that some employees believed gender equity has gone too far. One-fifth of the survey's respondents believed that employment equity programs have already given women an unfair advantage (Canada. Solicitor General 1992, 5).

Communication

Women and men have different styles of conversing. These differences, which are rooted in fundamental gender differences, have significant consequences for women in the workplace. Differences sometimes are not understood by the two genders and can give rise to misunderstandings, unnecessary friction, often putting women at a disadvantage.

In her book, *You Just Don't Understand,* Deborah Tannen describes the nature of the differences in men's and women's style of conversing. While men tend to report-talk, women's style is to rapport-talk. The men's style is more usual in a formal meeting or conference as it is inclined to include persuasion, argument, debate; advice, and opinions. The women's style opens doors, creates connections through questions, self-revelation, and reactions. Tannen notes that:

> If women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy, while men speak and hear a language of status and independence, then communication between men and women can be like cross-cultural communication, prey to a clash of conversational styles. Instead of different dialects, it has been said they speak different "genderlects" (Tannen 1991, 42).

Deborah Kolb also reports on these differences. For example, she describes women who are "connected knowers," for whom rapport talk and dialogue are good descriptions of their approach to communication. Connected knowers learn through dialogue with others and not from challenge and debate. They use shared experiences to try and hook into the thinking of another and to build and nurture tentative and ill-formed ideas into new understandings (Kolb 1992, 5). Kolb refers to the work of Amy Sheldon, who "calls this approach double voice discourse, a dual orientation to the conflict — one has her self-interest and concerns in mind at the same time as she is enmeshed in the concern of the others. Rather than bringing fully developed proposals to the table, the ideal is to share the state of one's thinking and build on what others say" (Kolb 1992, 5).

Tannen says that many women, when they talk among themselves in situations that are casual, friendly, and focused on rapport, use cooperative overlapping. Listeners talk along with speakers to show participation and support. She notes that this type of

conversational style can be interpreted negatively by men as interruptions. Comments from people she interviewed for her book, *You Just Don't Understand*, illustrate that men felt interrupted by women who overlapped with words of agreement and support and anticipation of how their sentences and thoughts would end. If a woman supported a man's theory by elaborating on a point different from the one he had intended, he felt his right to tell his own story was being violated (Tannen 1991, 210).

In *Talking from 9 to 5*, Tannen observes that men and women learn to speak particular ways *because* those ways are associated with their own gender. Her concept of how gender displays itself has been influenced by the work of sociologist Erving Goffman. In his article "The Arrangement between the Sexes," Goffman used the term "genderism" for sex-class-linked behavioural practices. Gendered patterns of behaviour do not necessarily mean that there is anything inherently male or female about a particular way of talking nor that every individual woman or man adheres to the pattern. Rather a larger percentage of women or men *as a group* talk in a particular way (Tannen 1994, 15-16).

There are serious consequences arising from gender-based differences in communication. Citing work by E.T. Hall (1976) and D. Spender (1982), Judi Marshall suggests that women experience organizational cultures as "high-context, preprogrammed with male values" (1993, 95). High context transactions feature preprogrammed information that is in the receiver and in the setting, with only minimal information transmitted in the message. Women do not share much of the contexting that makes communication understandable. Furthermore, she argues, because of their subordinate social position, women do not have equal rights to engage in defining meaning. "Women have not been, and are still generally not, accepted as legitimate meaning-makers if their interpretations of reality differ significantly from established, male-based, notions of truth. Their values are unlikely to gain general validation and so are unlikely to transform the context of meaning in which they operate" (Marshall 1993, 95).

Deborah Kolb considers communication styles and gender in the context of the negotiating process (Kolb 1992). Here, the two different styles of communication and interpretations of those styles can strongly influence a final outcome. Stereotypes about appropriate behaviour for women overlaid on certain negotiating rituals can put women at a definite disadvantage, e.g., extreme opening demands, grandstanding, joke-telling. The negotiating process can present a situation where a woman and a man doing the same thing or speaking the same words can find that different meanings are attached to their behaviour (Kolb 1992, 11). "To level the playing field in negotiations, we will have to think about ways to find equality in the face of difference" (Kolb 1992, v).

Tannen, in *You Just Don't Understand*, reports that when men and women get together it is the men's style which tends to hold sway. She comments "male-female conversations are more like men's conversations than they are like women's. So when women and men talk to each other, both make adjustments, but the women make more. Women are at a disadvantage in mixed-sex groups" (Tannen 1991, 237).

In *Talking from 9 to 5*, Tannen explains how differences in conversational style play a role in installing a glass ceiling. When decisions are made about promotion to management positions, the qualities sought are a high level of competence, decisiveness, and an ability to lead. If it is men, or mostly men, who are making the decisions about

promotions, they are likely to misinterpret women's ways of talking as showing indecisiveness, inability to assume authority, and even competence (Tannen 1994, 136).

Even when women are in executive positions, their conversational style can have an effect. Lalonde, in her study *Walking on Broken Glass*, found that "women felt at the executive table that they often made contributions that fell on deaf ears. Within a short period of time, one of their male colleagues would repackage and present the same idea and it would be considered a valuable contribution to the discussion" (Lalonde 1993, 36). The women in Lalonde's study speculated that this might be related to voice patterns or power structures and that some people were just listened to because of who they were.

In *You Just Don't Understand*, Tannen speaks to the issue of adapting conversational styles. She observes that when women in authority speak in the feminine manner, they are seen as inadequate leaders. However, if they adopt the more masculine style expected of leaders, "they are seen as inadequate women. The road to authority is tough for women, and once they get there it's a bed of thorns" (Tannen 1991, 244).

She also writes about how adaptation by *both* men and women can help to redress problems caused by differences in styles of conversation. She notes that hurtful and unjustified misinterpretations can be avoided by understanding the conversational styles of the other gender. She concludes that the culprit is not an individual man or even men's styles alone, but the differences between women's and men's styles. If that is the case, she proposes, then both can make adjustments.

The Glass Ceiling

The term "glass ceiling" was coined in the late 1980s as a result of studies investigating barriers to women who aspired to executive positions. While the concept and usage of the term has been debated since then, recent research confirms that barriers keeping women out of executive positions still exist. Men and women have sharply differing perceptions on the existence and impact of these barriers.

In 1987, a landmark book, *Breaking the Glass Ceiling*, by a group of American researchers examined barriers specific to American female managers (Morrison et al. 1987). In boardrooms and offices, the "glass ceiling" became the jargon for the situation faced by female managers who aspired to executive positions but, because of their gender, were prevented from advancing higher by an invisible barrier. This barrier is essentially comprised of cultural and attitudinal factors that impede women's progress in the workplace.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, writing 10 years after the publication in 1977 of her book *Men and Women in the Corporation*, found that although progress had been made in the employment situation of women, women had still not penetrated the "glass ceiling," keeping them out of the highest positions. She also noted that women were reported to be dropping out of the executive race almost as fast as they were entering it. Women were still shut out of some inner circles and *stuckness* (i.e., being trapped in lower opportunity situations) was dampening aspirations and reducing commitment (Kanter 1987b, 15).

Many researchers have taken issue with the glass ceiling metaphor saying that for all its slickness and evocativeness it is conceptually imprecise (Hede 1993). Hede suggests that a more appropriate term to express the impediments that women encounter may be "sticky steps" which suggests that at every stage of a woman's career there are behavioural and attitudinal obstacles restricting women's progression to successive levels (Hede 1993, 12-13). These obstacles can limit women's performance at any step in the hierarchy.

Nevertheless, the term and reality of the "glass ceiling" continue to exist. In 1992, the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board observed that "women face real yet very subtle barriers that men do not...women can see their way to the top of the career ladder, but bump into an invisible barricade when they try to make the climb" (Hede 1993, 1).

In 1992, Morrison *et al.* revised and updated their extensive 1987 study of female managers in the United States. They found that the glass ceiling continued to exist in much the same form as it had in the past and performed the same function — to exclude women from upper-level management in most organizations. There was little change in terms of making higher-level management more accessible to non-traditional managers (i.e., managers who have been under-represented in management, including white women as well as women and men in visible minorities).

The Morrison team found four major barriers that were keeping women out of the executive offices:

- The road to the top for women is blocked. Men rise to the top through line assignments, starting new product lines and divisions or by trouble-shooting. Women who move up the management ladder do so through staff positions until their progress is blocked because they are considered to have staff mentality. Line assignments, the breeding grounds for top level executives, seem to be off-limits to women in many companies, although there is no evidence to suggest that these women could not perform well as line managers or top level executives.

- Women are confined by the roles society expects them to play. They have to avoid being too macho or too feminine. They have to get the right kinds of help and succeed on their own. They have to take risks without making mistakes. They have dual roles at home and at the office.

- Women are confined by the notion of feminine leadership that suggests they have a different leadership style. This is a belief propagated by women themselves. It has a detrimental effect on their advancement.

- Women are experiencing a vanishing support system. They are finding it more difficult to find sponsors who will take the risk of sponsorship. They are finding little support for their efforts at home, particularly if they are making more money than their spouses.

However, the Morrison team did find two positive new trends that are giving female managers hope:

- The development of a new "business imperative" that is replacing social responsibility as the main reason for curbing discriminatory practices. Some senior managers are developing more diversity within their management cadre because they need to respond to a more diverse labour market and business base and because they are under pressure to use all their talent available.

- There is a renewal of legal and legislative pressure in the 1990s. The U.S. federal government is taking action to ensure that gender and race bias are removed from business practices that affect managers in corporations.

Breaking the Glass Ceiling also sets about identifying what helped women get to the top (Morrison et al. 1992). The Morrison team conducted extensive interviews with female executives and top corporate leaders they called "savvy insiders" to determine what qualities women needed to break the glass ceiling and enter the corporate boardrooms. Out of 26 success factors, they found successful female executives had at least two of the following:

- Help from above. Every success case studied had some help from a superior over an extended period of time.

- A track record of achievements.

- Ability to manage subordinates. Managing subordinates well included not only making the best hiring decisions but also having the ability to train employees.

- Willingness to take career risks. This meant a willingness to change jobs, accept high risk assignments, and move from staff to line jobs.

- Ability to be tough, decisive, and demanding. Successful women spoke up, acted decisively, and fought for what they needed.

- Desire to succeed at any cost. Women who made it to the executive suite were likely to be driven, willing to sacrifice their personal and family life, and were mobile.

Beneath the Veneer suggested that men and women diverge sharply in their perceptions of the situation of women in the Public Service. One perception on which men and women disagree is the glass ceiling which prevents women from rising within the corporate structure. In the Task Force's survey, women in all occupational categories (67 per cent) believed the glass ceiling exists. Women who were managers in the Public Service were even more convinced (79 per cent) that the glass ceiling was a barrier to women's advancement in the Public Service (Canada. Task Force 1990, I:54). Over three-quarters of female managers believed they have to be better qualified than men to be promoted, as did women in senior-level jobs (77 per cent). Three-quarters of the men

disagreed (I:54). Men did not agree that women encounter a glass ceiling; their disbelief increased with seniority. More than 60 per cent (62 per cent) of men at senior levels in the Public Service did not believe in the glass ceiling theory (I:54).

Segregation, Underemployment, and Channelling

Women often find themselves clustered in certain types of occupations and work arrangements. There are complex reasons for this, including societal values, work and family issues and, to a diminishing extent, the educational background of women. Many of the occupations where women are highly represented are low-paying and are being adversely affected by economic restructuring and downsizing.

For a 1994 OECD report on *Women and the Restructuring of Employment*, Françoise Coré analysed the top 10 occupations of women and men. For Canada, she found that women were concentrated in fewer occupations than men. The top 10 occupations for women (in terms of number of women employed) accounted for 40 per cent of the female labour force, whereas the top 10 occupations for men accounted for only 22 per cent of the male labour force. Moreover, Coré observed that there was virtually no common ground between the two lists and that the most common occupations for both sexes have a particular unisex tendency. The report noted that "on each list the same occupations appear again and again, whatever the country" (Coré 1994, 5-6).

Coré also documented the segregation and concentration of women in the federal government in Canada. She noted that "three-quarters of the women are employed in four of the 72 sub-categories: as office workers, secretaries, administrators and program managers; one group alone — office workers — employs 44 per cent of the women." There is also what the report refers to as "vertical segregation," namely women concentrated at the lower echelons, especially in the central administration (1994, 8).

There have been few fundamental changes in the occupational distribution of women. A 1994 Statistics Canada report, *Women in the Labour Force*, found that although many women are entering occupations in which few women have worked in the past, most employed women in Canada are still concentrated in female-dominated occupations. Most working women remained clustered in fields such as teaching, nursing, clerical work, or sales and service jobs (Statistics Canada 1994).

The Statistics Canada report also found that women are more likely than men to work part time. Women accounted for 69 per cent of those working part time in 1993, a proportion that has remained fairly stable in the past two decades. However, one-third of women working part time wanted, but could not find, full-time employment (Statistics Canada 1994). Part-time work adds another dimension to gender-based employment segregation. Coré notes that, although part-time work makes a major contribution to the employment of women, it is not without drawbacks, often because the job categories involved are both separate and inferior (Coré 1994, 10).

A different manifestation of the segregation of women occurs at the most senior levels of management. Lisa Mainiero, in interviews with executive women, discovered that "late in their careers, most of the women discovered that they were the sole woman — or one woman of two — at the top of [their] firms. This meant each had to cope with the additional visibility brought about by being a woman in a high-level position" (Mainiero 1994, 16).

The reasons for the segregation, and frequently underemployment, of women has been attributed to a range of factors. Billing and Alvesson suggest that there is *gender symbolism* in organizations (1994, 234). Particular jobs signal, among other things, certain conceptions of gender, i.e., the job stands for what are held to be particular attributes of one sex. They also note that a job's association with something masculine or feminine may vary in different cultures and historical periods. Using the example of the feminization of the clerical workforce, they cite studies (Lowe 1987 in Loft 1992) showing that, at first, firms used the supposed special feminine characteristics of women as an excuse for not employing them. However, when they began to "appreciate what a valuable cheap source of labour women could be, these same characteristics were referred to in justifying their employment in large numbers to do routine work" (Loft 1992, 748 in Billing/Alvesson 1994, 235). Thus, the ideas of "appropriate work" for men and women can be used to either exclude or include women and are fundamental to reproducing the gendered division of labour.

Societal values are also important in establishing the norms for appropriate behaviour and expected results in an organization. It would seem that the jobs in which women dominate are undervalued by our society: "when women perform well it is more often attributed to effort and less often attributed to ability than it is when men succeed" (Deaux 1976 in Gutek 1993, 20).

Work and family considerations also play a role in segregation and underemployment. The 1994 OECD report by Coré asks whether the spread of part-time work has come about to meet the requirements of certain employers (supply-led) or to suit new categories of workers (demand-led). Although the report notes that it is extremely difficult to say, it also notes that "what is certain is that the phenomenon exists mainly in activities and occupations that are dominated by women and hardly anywhere else." The report states that more and more women are working part time against their will, since those are the only jobs available that fit their career profile. Women who have full-time jobs and decide at some point to work part time — generally for family reasons and for the want of adequate day care — cannot do so without changing jobs (Coré 1994, 10).

Segregation and underemployment of women have adverse consequences. Women who switch jobs to work part time can have their career advancement halted and frequently have to settle for a job that is below their skills and qualifications. Part-time work, as Coré observes, can place part-time workers in a "separate status, below that of full-timers, especially for social-security regulations" (1994, 10).

Occupational segregation also contributes to the wage gap. Statistics Canada reports that women working full-time earn 72 per cent of what men earn (1994). Moreover, many of the jobs held by women are found in branches of activities that are undergoing extensive restructuring because of changing patterns of competition, or, in the case of the public sector, the necessity of reducing spending and lowering the deficit (Coré 1994, 7).

Education has contributed to the occupational segregation of women. It is also helping to address the problem. Coré argues that the rationalization of low-skilled jobs will keep disappearing, and a rise in demand for more highly skilled workers will continue. These trends put women in unskilled jobs in a very vulnerable position, at the same time as more opportunities are opening up for very qualified women (Coré 1994, 7-8). The 1994 Statistics Canada study indicates that a post-secondary education appears to be the key to both breaking into the job market and breaking out of the "pink ghetto." There has been a sharp increase in the proportion of women with a post-secondary education. Such women are more likely to be in the labour force and working full time. They generally earn significantly more than those without a post-secondary education and more have broken into management and the professions (Statistics Canada 1994).

In her OECD report, Coré also notes that, despite education and career paths that are "still heavily differentiated by gender" (with girls gravitating towards general education, the humanities and social sciences), there should be increasing opportunities for women in the future. "In post-industrial society the skills and aptitudes that women acquire through their participation in the educational system (abstract reasoning, oral communication and so on) and the qualities that are often referred to as 'typically feminine' (organizational and interpersonal skills) will be increasingly in demand." The report concludes that "as a result, the 'difference' with female labour stems not so much from a lack of skills as from a lack of acknowledgement and proper use of these skills in the workplace" (Coré 1994, 7).

The Old-Boys' Network

The old-boys' network was identified in *Beneath the Veneer* as a direct attitudinal deterrent to the promotion of women in the Public Service (Canada. Task Force 1990, I:75). Subsequent research suggests that the old-boys' network continues to exist in the Public Service and that its implicit values are at odds with those of women. Some women who have been successful have had to adapt their management styles to work in male-dominated cultures. Those who do not adapt can face serious consequences in their careers.

Three years after the publication of *Beneath the Veneer*, Susan Phillips, Brian Little, and Laura Goodine of Carleton University interviewed 56 women who were senior managers in the federal Public Service from two departments and one central agency. The primary objective of this study was to identify the factors which contributed positively and negatively to senior female managers' level of satisfaction (Phillips et al. 1993). While not necessarily representative of all women in the Public Service, their insights provide a useful follow-up to *Beneath the Veneer*.

The study found that the old-boys' network was still a serious attitudinal barrier. Senior-level women "are not listened to by male colleagues and often are unaware of potential developments or directions because they are shut out of 'old-boys' networks" (69). The interview results also indicate that the least valued factors in job satisfaction for these women were power and physical conditions of work. When asked to identify the differences between the ideal and actual working conditions, the managers consistently replied that the opportunity to engage in power-seeking behaviour, to be busy all the time, or to have a highly structured work environment were more prevalent than desired. There was considerably more game playing than these managers wanted. They sought an organization that was flexible enough to accommodate home and work responsibilities, and to create a supportive, nurturing environment that treated employees fairly. Although authority, recognition, and opportunities for advancement were important, these female managers did not value status, the trappings of power, or competition for its own sake.

Lalonde also reports from her interviews with 29 senior-level women in the Public Service that many felt their success had to be achieved "within a framework that is predominantly male and continues to cater to male values where the 'old-boys' network' continues to flourish" (1993, 36). Many of the first women to rise to the senior echelons of the Public Service have noted that they had to become more "masculine" in their management styles if they wished to move ahead (27). A number of women had to deal with negative reactions from male peers and superiors if they behaved in less of a "masculine" and more of a "feminine" fashion. These women "felt part of their success was learning to operate in a male-dominated culture and to adapt to the rules and follow the male role model." "Those that did not [adapt] found the going rougher and the opportunities fewer" (27-28).

Many of these senior-level women were surprised they had succeeded in a "world still dominated by a male culture" (Lalonde 1993, 70). The author suggests that much mystery continues to surround how promotions are made and decisions are taken at the top levels (72). Women have been derailed with little understanding of why or the criteria by which they were judged (72).

Lisa Mainiero, in her study of how women become identified as promotable and viable candidates for senior management, found that political processes played an instrumental role. In her interviews with 55 high-profile executive women about key events in the early stages of their careers that allowed them to become fast tracked she found that there was a "political process that catapulted most of these women onto the fast track early" (Mainiero 1994b, 55). Assignments that allowed them to gain the attention of senior management and to attract top level support were critical.

Lack of access to key networks can have serious consequences for the career advancement of women. Tannen, in *Talking from 9 to 5*, observes that for women to get ahead they must ensure, in addition to doing excellent work, that their work is recognized. "Doing brilliantly at a project that no one knows about will do little good in terms of personal advancement; doing well at a high-profile project that puts you into contact with someone in power who will thereby gain first-hand knowledge of your skill, may make the big difference when that person speaks up at a meeting at which promotions are decided" (Tannen 1994, 135).

Many women fail to receive adequate information on job opportunities therefore limiting their career advancement. The lack of mentors for women is often seen as a barrier to their moving into managerial positions. Men tend to mentor men and leadership for women is lacking. Women feel that "more opportunities for networking and informal mentoring would be supportive of their careers and professional development" (Canada. Treasury Board 1993, 7). Nina Colwill suggests that women often find themselves excluded from the informal, male-dominated networks of their organizations, a process that bans them from the power strongholds of the organization, even to the extent of lowering their probability of promotion (Brass 1985; Forisha and Goldman 1981 both in Colwill 1993, 84).

Greater Harassment of Women

Harassment in the workplace is a fact of working life for many women. The profile of harassment as an issue has grown in recent years. More complaints are reported and the nature of complaints has evolved. Some analysts have attributed recent trends in harassment to underlying organizational values that have gender-based attitudinal dimensions. Others have noted that the growing representation of women in senior positions has triggered a backlash that further contributes to situations of harassment. Organizations that have successfully combatted harassment in the workplace use multi-faceted approaches combining strong anti-harassment policies with educational and awareness-building initiatives for managers and employees.

A study on harassment by the Evaluation, Audit and Review group of the Treasury Board's Administrative Policy Branch found that at least 1,173 official complaints of harassment were filed in a three-year period (1989/90 to 1991/92). Of these, 973 were filed with departments and agencies, 100 with the Public Service Commission and 100 with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Within the various organizations, 55 per cent of complaints were filed by women and 75 per cent were filed against men. In addition, at least 1,000 grievances related to harassment were filed during the three-year period. In 72 per cent of the cases, the grounds for complaints related to abuse of authority and personal harassment. Sexual harassment was cited in only 10 per cent of the cases (Canada. Treasury Board 1994, 6-7).

However, some studies in the United States suggest that sexual harassment is a significant issue. A 1992 national survey of female lawyers by Prentice Hall found that 45 per cent of trial attorneys who were women had been sexually harassed by a client in the past five years and 56 per cent reported that they had been harassed by colleagues (Kanter 1993b, 8-9).

Significant numbers of harassment cases are never officially reported. The Treasury Board study on harassment found the main reasons for hesitation on the part of harassment "victims" to break the silence and lodge complaints to be fear of reprisal, fear of making matters worse, and a belief that the complaint process is too strict, leading to confrontation rather than conciliation or mediation (Canada. Treasury Board 1994, 7).

Nonetheless, many organizations have witnessed an increase in the number of harassment complaints made formally by employees. The federal Public Service is one sector where there have been significant increases in the number of formal complaints. The Public Service Commission reports that in 1993/94, 182 formal cases of harassment were opened, an 82 per cent increase from the previous year (Canada. Public Service Commission 1994).

In the Canadian Bankers Association's casebook on employment equity, the TD Bank reported that it had experienced a small increase in harassment complaints. Although the number of complaints lodged with the Canadian Human Rights Commission had not changed, the bank's internal process had seen an increase in complaints lodged. The bank attributed this, in part, to changing attitudes in society at large. It also reported that, while most complaints arose within the context of sexual harassment, the bank's investigations often revealed that the behaviour of the alleged harassers also included other types of unacceptable behaviour such as racial, religious, and age discrimination. Cases were not bound by age or gender. In all instances, the alleged harassers did not view their behaviour as wrong or disrespectful (Canadian Bankers 1994, 35).

A trend that may be emerging in harassment cases, and one that is a departure from historical experience, is of specific types of complaints *against* women in managerial positions. Subordinates' resistance to female managers has been documented for at least three decades. Billing and Alvesson cite a 1965 study of 2,000 subscribers to the *Harvard Business Review* which concluded that two-thirds of the male subscribers and almost one-fifth of the female subscribers were uncertain as to whether they would work for a female manager. Several other studies have indicated that employers often express scepticism about women in managerial positions as they view them, among other factors, as being far too emotional (Billing/Alvesson 1994, 85).

Having a critical mass of women is a significant issue. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, in her article "Men and Women: Equal Partners?" (1993b), cites research that shows dissatisfaction and tension are greatest in groups in which there are several women or minorities, but not enough to fully balance numbers or to create a routine expectation of diversity. Tokenism is hard on the sole representative, but poses no threat to the majority group. When the traditionally dominant group is threatened by growing numbers of women, backlash and discrimination often occur.

Threatened members of the dominant groups sometimes express their discontent at shifting numbers by harassing the newcomers or trying to put them into their traditional subservient positions. Kanter reports that experts hold that incidents of sexual harassment involve dominance and power, not sex: gestures from hierarchical superiors to those below, older men to younger women. The more women, the more potential for harassment and the more it handicaps the women and distracts them from their tasks. Kanter notes one company where senior female professionals reported that "casual sexism" was pervasive. Each woman had examples of insulting or biased behaviour that was culturally acceptable and went largely unnoticed.

Corporate cultures that tolerate or do not notice behaviour that discriminates against or harasses women have been examined by a number of researchers. Billing and Alvesson note that "overt practices clearly discriminating against women are a less significant factor that the embeddedness of cultural ideas and values that permeate organizational life...and which are only partially possible to detect in observable structures, practices and behaviours" (1994, 34). They cite a study by Mills (1988, 356) that concludes that discrimination and sexism can normally be assumed to be part of an organization's culture: "gender discrimination, far from being obvious and overt, is embedded more or less unconsciously, in the processes that make up an organization's culture" (34). They go on to say that "most, if not all, aspects of organizational culture can be seen as being gendered...Not only personnel policies and practices and informal social interaction but all spheres of organizational life..." (35).

Successfully combatting harassment in the workplace requires a multifaceted approach. The TD Bank, for example, has a comprehensive harassment policy that is supported with communications and awareness-building initiatives. When the bank updated its anti-harassment policy in 1992, it reaffirmed that it would not condone any conduct that could be construed as sexual harassment and defined other forms of harassment (based on race, colour, disability, and religion) that would not be condoned. It deliberately kept sexual harassment as a specific subsection of the policy in order to ensure that employees understood that the bank was not diluting its stand on this kind of behaviour. The bank also took steps to prevent harassment through awareness building and communications. An article distributed to employees, called *The Poisoned Environment*, pointed out how subtle forms of harassment could be disruptive in the workplace. This specific initiative triggered a number of complaints that the bank viewed as a successful component of its anti-harassment program because it then was able to address and resolve specific problems (Canadian Bankers 1994, 33-36).

The Treasury Board's *Study on Harassment in the Workplace* reported similar instances within the federal Public Service. When organizations were asked to provide suggestions for reducing harassment in the workplace and creating a better working environment, their main suggestions involved providing more training or awareness-raising sessions and placing greater emphasis on better educating the general population. Raising awareness among employees was seen as an effective contribution to attaining policy objectives (Canada. Treasury Board 1994, 8).

Work and Family Imbalance

Balancing work and family poses significant challenges for women. Working women with families continue to be expected to be the primary caregivers within the home. The literature points to several reasons for this phenomenon, including differences in socialization of women as well as differences in women's values. With the growth in the female participation rate, there are increasing numbers of households that have to address work and family issues. Employers that have introduced family-friendly policies and practices have found them to be positive for overall corporate performance.

In its report *Women and Economic Restructuring* the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre (CLMPC) noted that "despite their increased participation in paid employment, women continue to bear most of the responsibility for family care and domestic duties, including child and elder care." The report goes on to say that "surveys have shown that women generally do double the amount of unpaid work (housework, child care) that men do, while in families with children, women's total hours of paid and unpaid work exceed men's by more than 20 per cent. Recent data show some evidence of change in the traditional allocation of household responsibilities, with younger, better educated women more likely to be sharing household responsibilities with their partners in a balanced way" (CLMPC 1994, 8).

In her interviews with 29 senior-level women in the Public Service, Lalonde found that the model of success in senior management does not accommodate the family responsibilities that still, in many cases, fall to women. The system seems to assume that there is a "wife equivalent" running the domestic front that will allow female managers the freedom to attend meetings from early morning to late at night and to be free to travel extensively at the drop of a hat (Lalonde 1993, 34). One of the women observed that "there is a tremendous requirement to have a lot more resilience and a lot more energy because of the dual role that these females have to play" (Lalonde 1993, 35).

In *Balancing Work and Family: A Study of the Canadian Federal Public Sector*, Linda Duxbury, Christopher Higgins, Catherine Lee, and Shirley Mills found that a majority of Public Service employees in 1991 still held some traditional stereotypical views of women's role (Duxbury et al. 1991). Employees across the Public Service continued to view responsibility for children and the family as that of women, regardless of their employment situation. In addition, they found that women who put family ahead of work were not conforming to organizational expectations, which were to put work first. A follow-up study, *Strategies Used by Employed Mothers to Balance the Demands of Work and Family*, conducted telephone interviews with 300 working mothers (Lee et al. 1992). The team found that a large number of these women felt they needed a supportive supervisor who was understanding of family demands in order to feel comfortable in taking advantage of the benefits available to them as working parents. Taking advantage of benefits to which they were fully entitled depended, in short, on a supervisor with the right attitude.

The Glass Box study drew conclusions about the consequences of balancing work and family for female entrepreneurs. The authors — Belcourt, Burke, and Lee-Gosselin — concluded that women who are entrepreneurs work in a "glass box" surrounded by opportunities for growth and advancement, but lack the time, resources, knowledge, and contacts to take advantage of them. Women make one-third less than male entrepreneurs. The report noted that few female entrepreneurs received formal business education and had no time to train and upgrade themselves. Nearly half of the women in the study were married and had children living at home. Although the women reported conflict in their roles, they also reported great satisfaction and feelings of competence. The report concluded, however, that the role of women as primary caregivers to children and their perceived responsibility for the household, when added to the role of entrepreneur and businesswoman meant "role overload," an obstacle to women that their male counterparts rarely faced (Belcourt et al. 1991, 68).

Women's role as primary caregivers has been examined by a number of authors. Billing and Alvesson suggest that female socialization plays a key role. They write that:

> Many people will claim that as long as more flexible working conditions, reasonable maternity leave arrangements, sufficient child-minding possibilities and a more equitable division of housework and responsibilities for children do not exist, it will be impossible for many women to become, or even wish to become, a manager. The traditional socialization of women has always told them that it is their responsibility to take care of home and children and possibly other family. Therefore becoming a female manager will appear to most women to be a tenuous utopia, unless there is an untraditional division of labour in their home or unless the children have grown up (Billing/Alvesson 1994, 53).

Differences between male and female values about work and family are further documented by Helgesen. She found that women made time for activities not directly related to their work. Although all the senior-level women interviewed had open-ended jobs that demanded long hours, none permitted this to mean the sacrifice of important family time. One of these women, divorced with two school-aged children, never went into the office on weekends and discouraged her employees from doing so because "they have families too." She summed up the prevailing view when she declared that her family life did not suffer because it was her *priority*; given a conflict, "I always put my children first." She was willing to put off work-related tasks that did not demand immediate attention in order to prevent business responsibilities from infringing on family time (Helgesen 1990, 22-23).

Helgesen postulates that the need to integrate workplace and private sphere activities made the women's lives more complex, but also gave them a certain advantage. "Those in the diary studies simply had no choice but to become well-integrated individuals with strong psychological and spiritual resources in order to wrest what they sought from life. Mintzberg's men [referring to an earlier diary study of executive men], developed into less rounded individuals, more subject to the human and intellectual alienation that makes the workplace, and life itself, sterile" (Helgesen 1990, 33). Helgesen cites a study by Jan Halper and concludes that this alienation leads to the "quiet desperation" characterizing many successful men. Halper found that "although the majority saw their sacrifice of family and personal time as the inevitable cost of success, and claimed that they would not do things differently if given a chance, they nevertheless confessed to deep feelings of emptiness, pointlessness, and resentment, a dissatisfaction that, though vague and inarticulated, was also profound" (Halper 1988, 30-35 in Helgesen 1990, 33).

The necessity of balancing work and family is growing for both women and men. Coré, in her OECD report, states that:

> Although still highly prevalent among employers, the idea that women workers are less readily available, less motivated and less productive...seems ready for the scrap-heap of misconceptions...Workers who can rely on a full-time homemaker to relieve them of all household and family concerns are a dying breed. Today, every day, the vast majority of workers must confront the problem of organizing their

personal and family lives in the light of the constraints put upon them by professional responsibilities and an ill-suited environment (Coré 1994, 6-7).

Coré concludes that "as women carve out a larger and larger place for themselves in the labour market, it is increasingly unrealistic to marginalize them as a minority. It is chiefly through measures of a general nature...that equal opportunity must be pursued. It also has to be recognized that coping with both professional and family responsibilities is a problem for all workers — not merely for women — and that across-the-board solutions must be found (Coré 1994, 12).

Employers that have responded to addressing work and family issues report positive results. Rosabeth Moss Kanter reports that a major international survey of management culture found that respondents in 26 countries agreed on the value of "win-win" practices, those that are considered good for family and company alike (Kanter and Parkes 1991).

Positive benefits were also found in a survey conducted by Towers Perrin management consultants in the United States. A majority of companies surveyed that offer ways for employees to balance their professional and private lives say those efforts are worth the cost. Among more than 100 employers polled, 65 per cent that offer programs such as unpaid leaves of absence, paid time off for relocation, and health benefits for part-time workers or elder care resources say that they enhance employee loyalty. Forty per cent of the companies offering these types of programs said that they have a positive impact on productivity (Staff Perks 1995).

Stress and Coping

Working women can face at least two sources of stress compared to men: their move into the workplace in greater numbers than before, a move not without resistance and difficulties; and the lack of change in family role responsibilities. "Women would be under less stress if they could work as equals in the workplace *or* if they could shed some family responsibilities" (Gutek 1993, 18). Gender role stereotyping has led to much frustration and stress for women. In spite of, or perhaps because of this, women seem to have developed a wide variety of coping skills.

In order to survive in a patriarchal organizational culture, women have developed coping strategies to deal with male-dominated work environments. Judi Marshall believes that to understand fully women's stress and their coping mechanisms one must appreciate the context and stage a woman's awareness level has reached about any workplace inequities she faces (Marshall 1993, 90). She developed a four-stage model of cultural awareness as to how female managers perceive an organization as male-dominated and their resulting coping strategies (Marshall 1993, 99-106):

- muted — unaware; do not see organizational cultures as male-dominated and want to be treated as people rather than as women;

- embattled — have an awareness of the culture as male-dominated, are angry about it and exhibit highly reactive behaviour;

- rebellious — counter gendered definitions; attitudes are offensive in attacking inequality and in challenging what is accepted by others;

- meaning-making — assume that women have equal power to shape cultures; these women understand the genesis of the male workplace culture, and give themselves the right to redefine the workplace context; see perspectives as choices and so there is flexibility as to what perspective they choose to adopt.

Marshall suggests that female managers' coping is "directed more toward surviving than thriving, and therefore may be constraining in the longer term" (Marshall 1993, 90).

Another method of coping that researchers are only beginning to address is known as "the denial of personal discrimination" (Colwill 1983, 82-83; Gutek 1993, 19; Marshall 1993, 99-101). Although denial is usually thought of as an ineffective coping tool, some women are surviving by creating new realities for themselves by refusing to accept that they are being discriminated against and in so doing are refusing to acknowledge limitations to their career advancement.

Another coping option for some women is to choose in favour of their careers, and so forego marriage and children in order to devote more time and energy toward their careers (Lalonde 1993, 19-20).

Women who are managers tend to feel very isolated, especially when they are in traditionally male-dominated fields. The expected demands and constant scrutiny that accompany being perceived as the token female manager are very stressful. "Performance pressures are heightened by the visibility that comes with being relatively rare" (O'Farrell and Harlan 1982 in Gutek 1993, 20). Gutek observes: men in a female-dominated situation "do not appear to be devalued, isolated, or subject to female hostility" (Schreiber 1979 in Gutek 1993, 20). Women can experience this isolation simply as a result of their existence, or because they are seen as challenging the existing system. "Much of women's communication is therefore trying to assert their legitimacy and maintain membership. They are not guaranteed inclusion" (Marshall 1993, 97). This is time and energy that could and should be used in other areas.

It would seem that women face more workplace and personal stress than their male counterparts, yet do not seem to suffer greater stress consequences than men (Statham 1993, 121). The reasons for this are not fully understood but it would seem that, despite the added stress and workload, many women still derive satisfaction from working outside the home. In some instances, women may use their work, or their family, as a coping mechanism to reduce the impact of stress (Gutek 1993, 18). Multiple roles can result in "health problems for married women under the age of 40 with children. For women without children — or women over 40 with children — multiple roles actually enhanced overall health" (Arber et al. 1985 in Statham 1993, 114).

Marshall presents the notion of coping as either "adaptive or transformational" (1993, 107). There is always pressure to conform in the workplace milieu, and women who are managers are constantly faced with the decision of whether to change themselves or the system. In making these decisions these women will ultimately play an important role in modifying or legitimizing the current system.

The Phillips, Little, Goodine study, *Just Managing and Women Managers* (1993), showed some ways in which women in the Public Service cope with their stress. The authors reported that some of the women they interviewed intended to leave the Public Service. They also presented the women's suggestions for improving women's situation in the Public Service and so, perhaps, retain those discouraged female managers who planned to leave.

In this study, the respondents, all women who are managers in the Public Service, were asked to indicate their job plans for 10 years hence. Thirty-nine per cent planned to pursue a new career outside the Public Service. Twenty-six per cent expected to retire or work part time outside the Public Service. Forty-three per cent planned to stay and advance in the federal government. The authors concluded that "figures signal lack of a long-term commitment by a large portion of today's female managers" (Phillips et al. 1993, 60).

The women in the study offered some suggestions as to what the Public Service could do to help develop, advance, and retain women. They urged an increased responsiveness to the work and home balance and favoured more flexibility among supervisors and co-workers as opposed to new policies and compressed work weeks. Understanding was seen to be more important than formal arrangements in accommodating the challenges that female managers face in the Public Service (57).

In terms of promoting women in the Public Service, over one-third of those surveyed in the Phillips study felt that a change in attitudes and management style by male managers was necessary for conditions in the Public Service to be more fair towards women. The female managers had low levels of expectations for their departments. One-third felt government had little real commitment to advancing the position of women, or else they were totally unaware of any follow-up efforts on issues raised in *Beneath the Veneer* (59).

Approaches That Work

Cultural and attitudinal barriers to women at work can be addressed. A number of studies have examined successful strategies and approaches. The findings highlight how senior managers play a key role in serving as champions of diversity in the workplace and in holding managers throughout their organizations accountable for achieving it. Changes to specific human resource practices, including recruitment as well as developmental initiatives such as mentoring, have also helped promote women's full participation in the workplace. Finally, measures to transform corporate culture are critical components of successful strategies to address the attitudinal, often subtle, barriers to women at work.

Top management commitment is crucial in fostering diversity. Ann Morrison, in her research of integration practices used in 16 of the most progressive organizations, found that only one of the 52 different types of diversity practice was used in all of the organizations (Morrison 1992, 18).

The only common practice among the 16 organizations was top management's personal intervention to promote diversity:

> Top executives constantly advocate, nag, nudge, query and otherwise influence their direct subordinates and other employees to do something to foster diversity. They intervene to modify or abandon traditional administrative procedures, such as word-of-mouth recruitment methods, that systematically exclude women. They demand that non-traditional managers be included as candidates for replacement charts. They reject merit pay and bonus recommendations for their managers' subordinates when it is clear that non-traditional managers are not being treated equally. Their personal role, often carried out behind the scenes, in making managers aware of and accountable for diversity is probably the single most important factor in the effectiveness of these organizations' efforts (Morrison 1992, 18).

Accountability tools are increasingly used by organizations that have successfully addressed workforce diversity. The Morrison team found that accountability tools comprise 23 of the 52 types of practices discovered in their research. Not only are they frequently used in the 16 organizations, but they also represent the most critical component of the entire diversity effort in many of the organizations. As such, they are important as well as relevant. Writing about the findings, Morrison notes that "the current emphasis on accountability is a shift from the previous emphasis on changing employees' attitude about diversity and hoping or assuming that they would then behave more fairly towards others who are different." She concludes that "it seems encouragement to change has given way to enforcement, probably because managers were not seeing enough tangible results from the former" (Morrison 1992, 18).

The use of management accountability mechanisms by government employers is also growing. In her OECD article, Washington mentions the common use of management accountability tools, such as performance contracts, in the reform of human resource management practices by public sector employers. In some countries, senior management's accountability for equal opportunity programs is already in place. In New Zealand, for example, responsibility rests with the chief executives of government departments. Progress in equal opportunity forms part of the performance appraisal on which the renewal of their contracts is based (Washington 1994, 11).

Developmental activities to prepare non-traditional employees for advancement through management have grown in importance in a number of organizations. The Morrison diversity study found that these activities include, among others, special programs for high-potential employees or new recruits as well as formal and informal networking and mentoring activities (Morrison 1992). The importance of mentoring to women is

emphasized by Lisa Mainiero. In her study of 55 women who were executives, she found that approximately 40 per cent of the women discussed the importance of mentoring other women (Mainiero 1994b, 17).

Changing corporate culture remains a priority. Janet Lalonde found that most of the women interviewed in her study *Walking on Broken Glass* felt that changing the attitudes and mindset of corporate culture must continue. One woman commented: "It's one of those things that has to continue to be a priority — changing culture, changing habits, changing perceptions takes a long time — if you don't keep paying attention to it, it will backslide" (Lalonde 1993, 38).

The TD Bank also notes that sustained effort is needed to ensure appropriate behaviour in the workplace. In its efforts to build a positive environment for employment equity, the bank has learned that management guidelines are very important components of anti-harassment strategies. "Managers must be seen to lead by example and must be vigilant for behaviours which are offensive. Since the standard of appropriate behaviour changes as society's values change, managers need ongoing guidance on the types of behaviour that need to be discouraged and the standards of conduct that should be encouraged" (Canadian Bankers 1994, 36).

Sharing responsibilities for implementing diversity contributes to success. Morrison writes in *New Solutions to the Same Old Glass Ceiling* that the "most effective practices are likely to be those which are chosen through a democratic process...Involving both traditional and non-traditional employees in planning and implementing a diversity effort — through one or more task forces, for example — may be the best way of moving forward...Success seems to hinge on having open discussions about the problems...and collaborating on the solutions" (Morrison 1992a, 19).

Similar perspectives are expressed by Rosabeth Moss Kanter. She writes that "use of task forces and problem-solving teams helps break down the barriers between departments, occupations, ranks and statuses that in the past blocked opportunities, disempowered, and put a person's fate in the hands of a single boss. Now it is easier for competence to prevail over status, and for people in otherwise 'invisible' jobs to stretch and show off their skills" (Kanter 1987b, 14).

In her article "Change Masters vs. Change Stiflers," Kanter says that changing company culture requires a change master and that mastering change requires a shared corporate vision and management that can define clearing and be responsible for the changes. She notes that education, experimentation and innovation must be companywide. Support systems should be compatible with new directions. Communication must be clear and rewards evident (Kanter 1988).

A commitment to action is critical. Lalonde cites an article by Bremer and Howe (1988) that examined successful strategies used by seven different public sector agencies in Oregon to increase the representation of women in management. Their findings include the necessity for a strong management commitment, improved opportunities, using a pool of qualified women for recruiting, hiring the most qualified persons available regardless of gender, training for on-the-job and career development, and promoting values of

excellence and equal opportunity. Bremer and Howe commented on a lack of emphasis by the successful agencies on an affirmative action plan and an affirmative action officer. They interpreted the message to be "just 'do it' and allow for mid-course corrections, if necessary, along the way" (Lalonde 1993, 62).

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NOTES TO READERS

These notes provide background to the report on:

- concepts and definitions related to "culture," "equity," and "harassment";

- Public Service of Canada terminology for titles, occupations, and structure;

- focus groups;

- Environics-DRZ, the consulting firm which carried out the focus group study and initial literature review for the Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS: "CULTURE," "EQUITY," AND "HARASSMENT"

The following discussion outlines concepts and definitions used in this report, including explanations about "gender," "employment equity for women," "gender equity," "traditional culture," "harassment," and "organizations that perform well." These explanations are tied to the context of the report, namely, the culture, attitudes, and effectiveness of the Canadian Public Service workplace.

In the course of preparing the report, the Consultation Group found that these and related expressions are in a state of evolution. In everyday language, these expressions are also often used imprecisely or are prone to misinterpretation. For example, the term "sexual harassment" is used when "gender-related harassment" might be more appropriate.

Culture/Organizational Culture

The "culture" of a society, organization or group refers to its members' collectively shared patterns of meaning, values, assumptions, and expectations that guide and shape their understanding, perceptions, and predictions on matters of mutual interest or common experience. It can include rites, roles, rules and other traditions that reflect the shared culture, including the approach taken in identifying and choosing new members and instilling them with the culture's values and expectations. A culture may be deep-rooted and long-lasting or it may be superficial and short-lived. It can be relatively static and unchanging or it can be vibrant and changeable.

An individual's attitude and behaviour may be shaped by many cultural factors and other influences (abilities, experiences, increasing awareness) so that cultural influence need not be limiting.

Gender/Sex

The term "sex" commonly refers to physical attributes. Anthropologists use "gender" or "gender culture" to refer to the culture of an individual that results from the socialization and conditioning processes experienced by most individuals of that sex compared to the other sex. It includes practices associated with a particular gender. A gender reference is sometimes simply shorthand for traits or practices that are attributed stereotypically to a gender (culture) in a society, whether or not that reference is valid.

Gender Equity, Gender Balance, and Employment Equity

"Gender equity" means individuals being treated fairly, and with respect as equals, regardless of their gender practices (e.g., manner of dress).

Although gender-related cultural practices in a society may change over time, the pace of change may differ depending on many factors. The more deep-rooted and sanctioned cultural practices are, and the more firmly they are linked to holding and maintaining power, the greater the difficulty in bringing about change. A gender practice which threatens physical or economic survival will usually be more readily changed (e.g., wearing a skirt near machinery can be dangerous). Gender stereotyping can contribute to unthinking practices and can be the most subtle and difficult to change (e.g., wrongly assuming a female employee is unable to travel on business because she has young children).

"Gender balance" refers to a situation where each gender culture can flourish and interact without being dominated or displaced by another. Any cultural barriers are transcended and the workplace draws on the strengths of all employees. Gender balance could also be used less rigorously to describe a situation of equitable representation of women and men in an organization.

"Employment equity for women" refers to employed women being treated fairly (but not necessarily identically) compared to men. It means that women are not being unfairly discriminated against in the workplace either because of their sex or because of their gender-related practices. Employment equity also accommodates women's "equality rights." These are the democratic rights provided in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in the *1982 Constitution Act*, whereby women's and men's equality before the law is assured unless there are reasonable grounds for providing otherwise. More colloquially, "employment equity" is also described as "gender equity in the workplace."

In considering ways in which attitudinal and cultural barriers to the advancement of women occur in the workplace, it is useful to keep these distinctions in mind. Sometimes barriers are rooted in attitudes that exclude women simply because they are women.

More often the barriers occur because of gender (culture) differences alone, or a combination of both factors, compounded by gender stereotyping. For example, if men are socialized to protect women, some men may find it difficult to accept women in combat positions in the armed forces, even those women who possess the necessary size and strength.

Harassment

Generally speaking, harassment in the workplace includes any behaviour that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive atmosphere, or intrudes on a person's dignity.

"Traditional Culture," "Male-Dominated Culture," and "Organizations That Perform Well"

The terms "traditional culture," "traditional male culture," and "male-dominated culture" appear throughout this report. Basically, these expressions refer to the male cultural patterns and attitudes associated with an era when men had greater power (legal, social, and economic) relative to women than they do today. For example, 50 years ago, some Canadian women did not have the right to vote and compared to men, their access to universities, the professions, and paid employment was limited by law or tradition, (e.g., the Public Service's former requirement for female employees to resign on marriage).

Some workplace organizations and practices still reflect the values inherent in the male-dominated culture and attitudes of workplaces of the past. They remain traditional, male-dominated, autocratic or at best paternalistic, hierarchical, and undervalue the contribution of women. Often their effective functioning relies on informal networks of insiders, popularly known as "old-boys' networks." Such organizations and practices are characterized as "traditional (male-dominated) cultures." These cultures tend to resist change unless the transformation is actively led by top levels, or is otherwise understood by its members as essential for survival.

Our intention is not to suggest that the women and men working in a traditional organization always personally embody that culture. Women and men in today's workplaces have been influenced by many different values and circumstances. The "diverse" workplace of today includes people raised in a wide array of cultural contexts, including cultures that differ significantly in their gender practices.

The effectiveness of traditional organizations can be compared with organizations that have adopted more contemporary cultures. Recent literature suggests that in the face of the present challenges of uncertainty, resource constraint, technological change, and restructuring of the economy, the successful "organizations that perform well" share common traits. To function effectively, these organizations have rejected a traditional workplace culture that is homogeneous, hierarchical, centralized, relatively rigid, and focused on the short term for one that is risk-avoiding, control-based, and task-centred. Through top-level leadership, modern effective organizations are adopting a culture that

tends to be people- and client-centred, with a flat and decentralized structure, that is "right-sized," flexible, forward-looking, and concerned with providing effective results through quality service, excellence, innovation, and effective risk management. Such organizations aim to establish a shared vision and a fair and decent workplace that thrives on diversity and that values and effectively employs the abilities of all employees, regardless of gender.

The Canadian government has embarked on a comprehensive initiative known as Public Service Renewal. One of its goals is to generate the transformation needed in the Public Service workplace culture to best enable it to function effectively in the face of future challenges. A recognized key to success will be its ability to ensure that every Public Service employee, regardless of gender, is effectively employed.

PUBLIC SERVICE TERMINOLOGY

For readers unfamiliar with Canadian Public Service terminology, the following briefly explains specialized terms used in this report. See also the accompanying diagram that illustrates the structure of the senior ranks of the Public Service.

Under Canada's system of parliamentary government, departments and agencies are headed by elected officials known as "Ministers" who are members of the government's "Cabinet." These organizations are in turn each managed by a deputy head who is either the "Deputy Minister" or "Deputy Head." Deputy heads are appointed by the government, generally from within the career civil service known as the "Public Service." Members of the Public Service are "Public Service employees."

The senior levels of the Canadian Public Service reporting to deputy heads are known as the "Executive group." They are usually one to three levels below the deputy minister in a federal department or agency. Members of the Executive group (referred to as "EXs") are graded by "level" from 1 to 5 (i.e., EX 1, EX 2, EX 3, EX 4, and EX 5), with the most senior level being the EX-5 group and entry being at the EX-1 level. Usually a reference to "top management" or "senior management" means the deputy head and those at the top levels of the Executive group (i.e., those at the EX-4 and EX-5 levels).

Typically EX 4s and EX 5s are "Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs)," EX 2s and EX 3s are "Directors-General (DGs)" and EX 1s and EX 2s are "Directors," with the higher level in each case indicating a relatively greater scale and complexity of responsibilities.

All other members of the Public Service not in the Executive group are categorized by "occupational group" and "level" (usually at levels from 1 to 7, with higher levels indicating more senior positions). These employees are sometimes referred to by the abbreviated forms for their category. For example, a "PM 5" refers to an individual in program management at level 5. Similarly, an "FI 2" is a financial officer at the second level.

The Executive group is usually drawn from among those at the top level of each occupational group. For convenience, this selection pool is sometimes referred to as the "executive entry level" or the "EX minus 1" group. Those immediately below the EX minus 1 level are described as at the "EX minus 2 level."

Among departments and agencies, there are sometimes distinctions between "operating departments and agencies" and "central agencies." Usually, an operating department delivers programs and services directly to the public or to specific segments of the public, in a specific policy sector such as transport, agriculture, or the environment. In comparison, central agencies have horizontal responsibilities that generally cut across all departments and support the general organization of government or provide common services to all departments. They include the Privy Council Office (the head of which is the "Head of the Public Service"), the Secretariat to the Treasury Board (a Cabinet committee, the general management responsibilities of which include serving as the "employer" of the Public Service), the Public Service Commission (which safeguards the "merit principle" in staffing the Public Service), and the Canadian Centre for Management Development.

Canadian Federal Government
Departmental Senior Organization

ELECTED OFFICIAL — MINISTER

ORDER-IN-COUNCIL APPOINTMENT — DEPUTY MINISTER (DM)

TOP OR SENIOR MANAGEMENT — ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER (ADM) (EX 4, 5) | ADM | ADM

EXECUTIVE GROUP — DIRECTOR GENERAL (DG) (EX 2, 3)

DIRECTOR (EX 1, 2)

EXECUTIVE ENTRY LEVEL — ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, MANAGER, OR CHIEF (EX MINUS 1, 2)
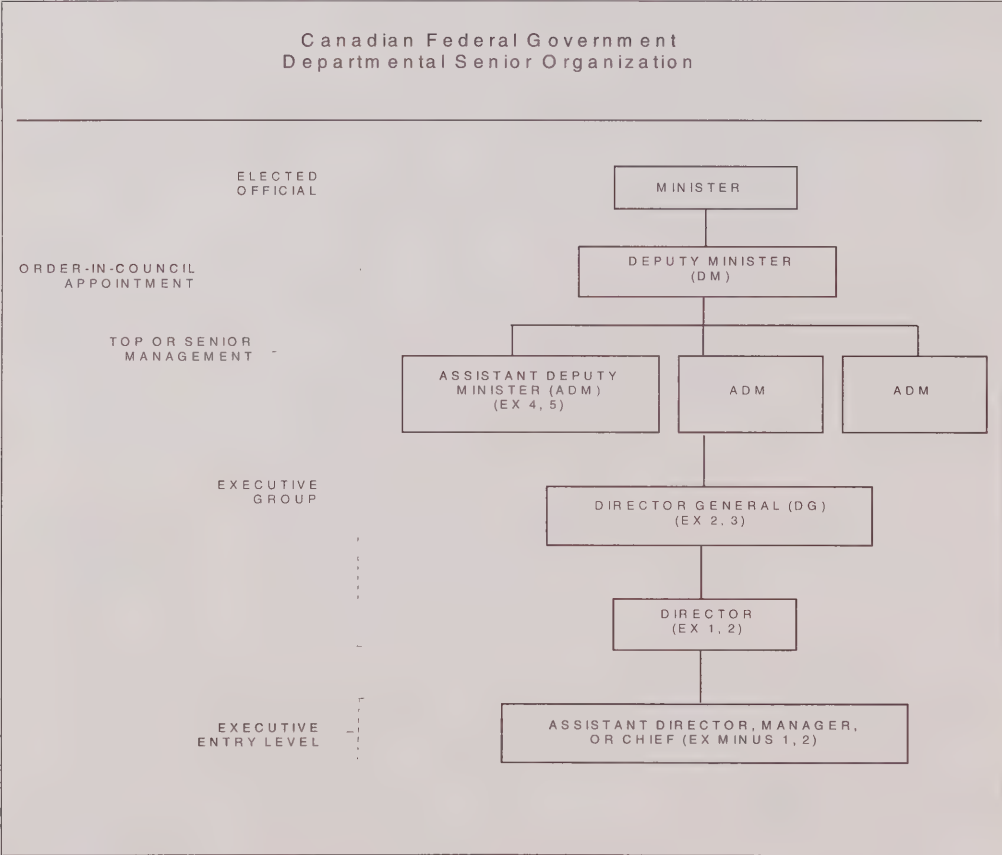
ON FOCUS GROUPS

The use of focus groups has become a well-established research method for analysts and decision makers to test and refine hypotheses about the opinions, values, attitudes, and motivations of people. One advantage of this approach is the flexibility it permits for active and continuous adjustment of the hypothesis to be tested as the issues become better defined through the process. Other advantages are relatively lower costs and simpler and faster execution than other more rigorous statistical validation techniques.

Focus group testing is often used as a prelude to other statistical research. Pre-testing questions in this way can significantly reduce the risk that a more costly, but statistically valid, survey will have poorly designed questions or fail to include a key question.

The principal disadvantage of focus group tests is that the results cannot be generalized to the larger population with any degree of scientifically measured confidence. The confidence placed in the findings from a particular set of focus group tests is a matter of judgement. This judgement is based partly on the design of the test itself and partly on an assessment of the skills of those who conduct the focus groups and interpret the findings, bearing in mind that these skills are as much an art as they are based on experience.

A well-designed and executed focus group test can offer results that are only suggestive and must be interpreted in the light of common sense. Often these results can be powerful in suggesting directions for further research, particularly by exposing critical issues.

Usually the results of focus group testing provide a more confident basis for action. They give decision-makers more insight into certain possibilities, better explanations of the acceptability or non-acceptability of certain options, and a better understanding of motivations, values, attitudes, and reactions. The findings can also provide an impression of the extent to which views might be widely shared among individuals with characteristics similar to those of the participants.

For those readers unfamiliar with the process of focus group testing, a brief description may be helpful. Small structured discussion groups of typically 5 to 15 people selected for certain characteristics are assembled under the leadership of a professional in the field. The leader guides the discussion in a focused and pre-planned way. The intention is to probe for and provoke reactions on specific points, but in a manner that does not prejudice the outcome. If a surprising and unexpected direction emerges in the discussion, as often happens, a skilled leader will capitalize on this development. The goal is to enhance the interplay among participants so as to elicit genuine views on the points at issue, a sense of their salience and degree of intensity, and, to the extent possible, the underlying explanations of why these views are held.

Usually more than one focus group is held. The greater the number of focus groups, the greater the clarity of the findings, and the greater one's confidence in relying on the findings. Some of the groups may be composed of similar participants, whereas in others, the composition of participants is consciously varied from the base group. This

is done to test for consistency or differences in the findings and reasons. The robustness of focus group findings may be further tested as part of the process, through such techniques as probing in-depth, one-on-one interviews or consultations with selected individuals who have relevant knowledge and experience in the test field.

Reporting and interpreting clearly the findings of focus groups depends on the experience, skill, and judgement of those doing so. Bearing in mind that the reputation of these individuals must depend on their track record, one can expect that their observations and conclusions will be biased conservatively.

A well-designed focus group includes the following features:

- Participants are not coerced in any way and are certain that the confidentiality of their views and their participation will be upheld.

- Focus group leaders are credible to the participants.

- The representativeness of the participants is appropriate for the issues being tested and the conclusions being generated.

- A sufficient number of focus groups are held to develop a sense of which findings generally hold across all groups and the likely explanation for this consistency.

- Where a difference in views dealing with sensitive issues or power relationships is anticipated among different types of people, the focus groups are structured so that there are enough groups containing only people of each type of characteristic, i.e., separated by gender, by language group, by occupation, by location, or otherwise, as warranted.

- A statement of the issues to be tested is clearly formulated, including any initial hypotheses about the expected findings.

- A strategically conceived and tested discussion guide that does not prejudice the outcome is available for the focus group leaders.

- A well-designed written questionnaire is completed by participants prior to the focus groups to serve as a consistency check on the views that emerge in the focus group discussions.

- Participants are selected through unbiased techniques so that holders of specific viewpoints are not screened out because they were not invited to participate or because they opted out of participating.

ON ENVIRONICS-DRZ

For this study, the firm Environics-DRZ was selected to carry out the focus groups and the basis of the literature review. Both David Zussman, Partner, and Donna Dasko, Vice-President had demonstrated considerable understanding, skill, and sensitivity in their previous surveys on gender-sensitive issues.

From Environics-DRZ's initial proposal, to the evolution and execution of this project, the professionalism, creativity, insight, and sound advice provided by David Zussman, Donna Dasko, and their colleague, Simone Philogène, Research Associate, proved this initial confidence was well-founded.

CONSULTATION GROUP ON EMPLOYMENT EQUITY FOR WOMEN

The Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women was established in 1991 to provide advice to the Secretary of the Treasury Board and to the Deputy Ministers Council on Employment Equity on the recruitment, retention, career development, and progression of women in the Public Service. It is one of four similar consultation groups, each with membership drawn from one of the four designated employment equity groups (women, visible minorities, Aboriginals, and persons with disabilities).

Members of the Consultation Group on Employment Equity for Women are appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury Board and are representative of the regional, linguistic, and occupational diversity of the Public Service. In 1994, the 11 members of the Consultation Group came from a range of departments and from the executive, officer, and support levels. Four were also members of other employment equity designated groups.

The Consultation Group meets periodically and receives briefings from departments on policies and practices in the Public Service that affect the employment of women. In turn, the Consultation Group provides advice on these matters and identifies gaps and emerging issues based on consultations with Public Service employees and experts and on the findings of special studies it commissions. The chairs of the four consultation groups on employment equity meet regularly to ensure cooperation and collaboration among the groups on issues of common concern.

Members of the Consultation Group meet with departmental management teams and employee groups on request to share its views and to learn about the gender equity issues of concern to both women and men in the Public Service. The Consultation Group also publishes periodic reports on its findings, assessments, and recommendations to foster awareness of specific issues.

Publications

The Consultation Group's 1992 report, *Gender Balance: More Than The Numbers*, concluded that in order to continue progress on employment equity in the Public Service, corporate culture and attitudes at all levels must recognize gender balance as a positive, necessary, and desirable objective. The report highlighted the importance for each department to develop values and attitudes that ensure that the goal of achieving better representation of women in all occupational groups and levels is understood and valued. It stressed the importance for top-level management to actively demonstrate these values and attitudes and the necessity for clear top-level accountability for results.

In May 1993, the Consultation Group released *Case Studies on Best Practices in the Employment of Women.* These case studies demonstrated that working towards gender equity can lead to unexpected success for organizations. The study found that top-level management in a range of private and public organizations across Canada are embracing workplace equity for women because experience has shown it makes good business and organizational sense. As their organizations achieve progress in gender equity, human resource management in general improves. Better human resource management results in better planning, higher retention rates, reduced costs for training, and a focus on developing the full potential of all employees. In turn, the organizations experience increased productivity and profits (in the business sector), and improved service to customers.

Both publications stressed that the goal of gender equity is "more than the numbers." The goal of employment equity is to create a fair and equitable workplace for women where their jobs, career development and recognition are not based on gender, but on skills and abilities, productivity, and the value of their contributions to the organization.

BENEATH THE VENEER

In September 1988, the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service was established to investigate the situation of women in the Public Service. The Task Force was to identify and recommend solutions to barriers encountered by women. The specific task was to outline problems in areas where women were under-represented; the lack of promotion of women especially to senior levels; and the difficulties women faced with entry to non-traditional occupations.

The Task Force released its report, *Beneath the Veneer*, in 1990. Using 1988 data, the Report examined both the quantitative and qualitative states of gender equity in the Public Service. It portrayed the organizational distribution of women in the following terms:

*   **Concentration**: Three-quarters of all women in the Public Service were concentrated in four traditional occupational groups out of a total of 72 occupational groups.

*   **Compression**: In all occupational groups women were compressed in the lower pay levels to a relatively greater extent than men with comparable education levels and years of service.

*   **Representation**: Women represented approximately 43 per cent of the Public Service population — almost identical to the representation rate of women in the Canadian labour force. However, the representation of women was low, in single-digit percentages, in 20 of the 72 occupational groups.

The report concluded that, apart from a few remaining systemic barriers, the barriers women faced were attitudinal and cultural. The major survey of barriers to the advancement for women, conducted for the Task Force by Statistics Canada, revealed that women and men have sharply different perceptions of the situation women experienced in the workplace. In general, women were more likely to perceive barriers to them in the workplace that men did not recognize. The report stressed that changing this situation must be a management responsibility.

Beneath the Veneer made a number of important observations and conclusions including:

*   The Public Service would be expected to produce more with fewer resources.

*   The workforce was changing and women were increasingly a larger part of it.

*   Both women and men would be seeking a more balanced lifestyle.

Beneath the Veneer was among the first research studies to recognize the importance of identifying and eliminating barriers to women in the workforce, both to the overall effectiveness of the Public Service and to individual managers.

DEPARTMENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

Former Name of Department	Current Department Name
Agriculture Canada	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Communications Canada	Canadian Heritage or Industry Canada
Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada	Industry Canada or Health Canada
Employment and Immigration Canada	Human Resources Development Canada Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Energy, Mines and Resources Canada	Natural Resources Canada
Environment Canada	Same
External Affairs and International Trade Canada	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
Federal Office of Regional Development (Quebec)	Same
Fisheries and Oceans	Same
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	Same
Industry, Science and Technology Canada	Industry Canada
Justice Canada	Department of Justice
National Defence	Same
Public Works Canada	Public Works and Government Services Canada
Revenue Canada, Taxation	Revenue Canada, Customs, Excise and Taxation
Revenue Canada, Customs and Excise	Revenue Canada, Customs, Excise and Taxation
Statistics Canada	Same
Supply and Services Canada	Public Works and Government Services Canada
Transport Canada	Same
Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat	Same

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Gender Balance in the Federal Public Service

Purpose of the Study

To conduct a "stocktaking" of the situation of women managers in the federal Public Service.

To determine whether there has been any progress in the situation facing women as well as to identify new issues or barriers which may have emerged within the federal Public Service since the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service was commissioned in 1988.

Issues

Is there a backlash developing against women in the federal Public Service due to efforts to redress the historical imbalance in the representation of women in the executive and managerial groups?

Are men generally supportive of women progressing up the ladder?

What occupational groups in the federal government are the most, and the least accessible to women?

Do barriers exist for women at the entry level to the Executive Group?

What is the nature of these barriers? (These might include: socialization, downsizing, few opportunities for promotions, backlash against efforts to promote women, wrong career path — such as special projects and staff work instead of line management, absence of a mentor, general attitudes, perception that women don't need the money, unwillingness on the part of men to share power, networking, view that women don't act like men, and stereotyping.)

Do women have the necessary skills to succeed in the federal Public Service? If not, what skills are lacking?

Are women seen as having any special skills or advantages as managers? (These might include: consensus-seeking styles, communication skills, flexibility, team builders, and people skills.)

Is harassment (i.e., sexual, gender-related, or other abuses of power) a serious problem in the workplace?

Are there large discrepancies between the formal selection process and the informal one?

Screening Questions for Selection of Candidates at the EX Entry Group Level

Participants must be full-time employees but could be working flex-time, four days per week, etc.

Participants must be at the EX minus 1 level (or, for regions only, at the EX minus 2 level).

Participants will be allocated to male or female focus groups.

Discussion Guide for Focus Groups

Introduction

Introduce the Focus Group procedures:

- We want your opinion. Not those of your department, your supervisor or any other group.

- Feel free to agree or to disagree.

- All responses are confidential and anonymous.

- You are being taped in order for us to keep track of your views.

- Individuals will not be identified.

- The session should last approximately 90 minutes (one hour and a half). There will be a ten-minute break.

Mention the sponsor — the Treasury Board Secretariat — wants participants' views on a number of issues regarding the Public Service.

Ask each participant to identify themselves by name and by department or agency.

Ask each participant to tell a little about themselves (describe their jobs, marital status, children at home, spouse working in the home or outside the home).

Remember all members of the group will be working at essentially the same level within the federal Public Service.

Introduce the Topic

As you know, the federal Public Service has undergone significant changes during the last few years. Most managers have seen their jobs change and many have experienced downsizing, decentralization, and restraint. As well, the Public Service has also gone through a period of renewal where ideas of empowerment and service quality have become central themes.

(For women) Within this context, I want to talk about the opportunities and barriers that women face in the federal Public Service and at home today. Our discussion will focus on the nature of the changes taking place in the workplace and whether you feel that the situation is better or worse than it was some years ago. Unless you have any comments or questions I would like to start by asking...

(For men) Within this context, I want to talk about the general state of the federal Public Service in light of the many changes taking place. Specifically, we are interested in probing your views on opportunities for women in the workplace. Our discussion will focus on the nature of opportunities and barriers, some possible solutions and whether you feel that the situation is better or worse than it was some years ago. Unless you have any comments or questions I would like to start by asking...

Themes

Note: The items which are numbered are high priority items. If time permits the remaining questions will be asked in the groups.

General

1. What are job opportunities like in the department where you work?
   What is the general work climate like?

   Probe for: opportunities, fear of lay-offs, downsizing, transfer of powers to other levels of government.

Inequalities

2. On balance, do you feel that women have an easier or a more difficult time than men in getting ahead in the federal Public Service? In what way?

   Probe for: attitudes, levels, opportunities for advancement, good jobs are not available to women, staff versus operational jobs, excluded from the power structure, outside the loop, judged more harshly than their male colleagues.

   How large are the inequalities?

3. Have inequalities decreased or become worse in recent years?
    How strongly do you feel that the policies towards remedying inequalities are
    adequate but actual practices (implementation) are at fault?

4. Since there is almost an equal number of men and women in Canada, do you
    believe that there should be an equal number of males and females at each level
    in your organization?

Causes of Inequalities

5. Do barriers exist for women in the federal Public Service?

    If "yes" — What is the nature of these barriers?

    Probe for: personal versus institutional circumstances. These include: work
    flexibility, availability of day care, work scheduling such as meetings called at
    the last moment, male networks, male domain, failure to be identified as potential
    management or executive material, poor training opportunities, lack of relevant
    skills (analysis, methodology).

    How can they be removed?

    If "no" — Please explain your position.

    Using your own experiences as a guide, in a competition for a job at the EX level in
    your department, is there a bias for any one gender? Do you think that there is a
    bias at the EX minus one level in terms of who *applies* for the job during the
    competition process? Who wins the job?

6. Is there any group of individuals in the government who you feel might be more
    supportive of women seeking promotions?

    Probe for: gender, occupational group, level of education, age, ethnic or
    language group.

    Is there any group which might be less supportive?

    Why do you think that women only make up 17 per cent of the executive group in
    the federal government?

    Probe for: discrimination, poor qualifications, family pressures, low levels of
    work motivation, don't need the money, can't handle the stress.

Policy Solutions

7. Are programs useful which encourage women to get ahead? (Explain if necessary — programs which promote targets to increase participation of women.)

    (Women only) Can you give me an example of what your department has done to help you succeed in your career?

    Probe for: promotion, training, support group.

    What more could have been done?

    Probe for: more support, job notices, guidance, training, nothing.

Contributing Factors

The Work Environment

8. Describe the type of woman who is most likely to advance in your department.

9. How would you characterize the relationship between women and men in your work unit? Is it antagonistic? Too friendly? Competitive? Cooperative?

10. Do you know any one who has experienced harassment in the workplace?

    Probe for: sexual, gender-related, or other abuses of power, types of harassment. (Note: This is a critical new issue and we will need precise examples, if possible.)

    Do you believe that the best women make it in your department or agency? That is, among the pool of candidates, do you think the most competent are selected for executive positions?

    Do you feel that the best men are also promoted in your department?

11. How would you explain why some women continue upward into senior executive jobs and others do not?

    Probe for: mentors, friends higher up, motivation to succeed, no kids or spouse, job stream.

    (Women only) Do you feel any particular pressure to represent the views of women, collectively, as opposed to your own personal views? Have you acted any differently than you normally would have?

Work and Home Life

12. What kind of personal sacrifices have you or others that you know had to make to get where you are today?

    Probe for: less time with family, children, spouse, friends, parents, marriage break-up, personal development.

13. Does balancing work and home life represent a particular challenge in terms of your career progression? How does one cope with this responsibility?

    Probe for: trading off level of support for spouse's career. If personal aspirations have been moderated?

    Is work more stressful than it was a few years ago?

    In your experience, do men carry the same work load as women in the home? Has the situation changed much over the last few years?

    Is the present work environment unfairly organized in favour of men? In what way?

    Is there something the Public Service as employer should do to address the home/work challenge?

    Probe: to see whose responsibility this issue is. Who should pay for it?

Gender Differences

14. Do you believe that men and women bring different characteristics and ways of thinking to the job? If so, what are they?

    Does this mean that some people are more suited to being executives or managers than others? What differentiates them? (Note: in this instance we are looking for executive-type behaviour which includes leadership, agenda-setting, big picture skills, rationalizing resources. Management behaviour includes day-to-day operations, making things happen.)

    Is there such a thing as female management characteristics? What could these be?

    Probe for: consensus seeking, communicative, flexible, team-builders.

The Future

15. Have your views changed over the last five years regarding gender equality in the workplace? In which way? Why?

16. If you were formulating government policy, what steps would you take in order to achieve gender balance within five years in the EX category?

17. Finally, what kind of advice would you give a new employee at the EX minus one or lower level about managing her (his) career?

    Probe for: relying on the Public Service Commission/own department versus self reliance (luck versus skill) importance of ability/seen to be able.

    What advice would you give to a new woman employee?

Thanks for your participation

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS
(For completion prior to Focus Groups)

As an introduction to our discussion, please fill out the following questionnaire by checking the answer that best applies. Your answers will be kept confidential and anonymous.

1. Are you a manager?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

2. If no, do you wish to be a manager in the next few years?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

3. Are you a specialist?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

4. What are job opportunities like in the department where you work?

    ☐ Very good
    ☐ Good
    ☐ Poor
    ☐ Very poor

5. These days, do you feel that women have a more difficult time than men getting ahead in the federal Public Service?

    ☐ Much more difficult for women
    ☐ More difficult for women
    ☐ It is the same for men and women
    ☐ More difficult for men
    ☐ Much more difficult for men

6. Do barriers exist for women in the federal Public Service?

    ☐ Yes, to a great extent
    ☐ Yes, to some extent
    ☐ No, there are no barriers
    ☐ Don't know

7. Do you know of anyone (including yourself) who has ever experienced harassment in the workplace?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

8. If yes, please write a brief note describing the event.

_____
_____
_____

9. Is work more stressful than it was a few years ago?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

10. If yes, in what way?

_____
_____
_____
_____

11. In your experience, do men carry the same work load as women in the home? In what way? Has the situation changed over the last few years?

_____
_____
_____
_____

12. Do you believe that men and women bring different characteristics and ways of thinking to the job?

13. If yes, please explain.

14. When you think about your working life, there have likely been key events which have had a great influence on your career. Please describe the most critical event which has occurred during your career that has influenced the way you manage or interact with your work colleagues.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO
PRE-SESSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Profile of EX Entry Level Focus Group Participants

1. Summary of Responses

Prior to the focus group discussions, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire dealing with a variety of work-related issues in the Public Service. The results of the questionnaire are summarized below.

Note: The following summary pertains to focus group participants only. It cannot be generalized for the Public Service.

Respondents' Positions in Public Service

Table 1

Are you a manager?

	Male Participants %	Female Participants %
Yes	68	71

Opportunities and Barriers in the Public Service

Table 2

What are job opportunities like in the department where you work?

	Male Participants %	Female Participants %
Very good	10	2
Good	27	19
Neither good nor poor	34	45
Poor	20	31
Very poor	10	2

Table 3

These days, do you feel that women have a more difficult time than men getting ahead in the federal Public Service?

	Male Participants %	Female Participants %
Much more difficult for women	0	5
More difficult for women	17	61
The same for men and women	46	30
More difficult for men	27	5
Much more difficult for men	10	0

Table 4

Do barriers exist for women in the federal Public Service?

	Male Participants %	Female Participants %
Yes, to a great extent	3	16
Yes, to some extent	65	79
No, there are no barriers	25	4
Don't know	7	0

Harassment and Stress in the Workplace

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Table 5</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Male
Participants
%</td><td>Female
Participants
%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Do you know of anyone (including yourself)
who has ever experienced harassment in
the work place?</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Yes</td><td>59</td><td>70</td></tr>
<tr><td>No</td><td>41</td><td>30</td></tr>
<tr><td>Is work more stressful than it was a few
years ago?</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Yes</td><td>71</td><td>82</td></tr>
<tr><td>No</td><td>29</td><td>18</td></tr>
<tr><td>Do you believe that men and women bring
different characteristics and ways of thinking
to the job?</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Yes</td><td>68</td><td>85</td></tr>
<tr><td>No</td><td>32</td><td>15</td></tr>
</table>

2. Selected Responses from Open-Ended Questions on Pre-Session Questionnaire

Question: Do you know of anyone, (including yourself) who has ever experienced harassment in the workplace?

(Women)

- Gender harassment — assumptions that women get promotions because of filling quotas, etc., rather than being the most competent. Sexual harassment — both subtle and very direct. There are too many examples to describe here.

- Usually subtle form of harassment where you are singled out at meetings.

- A situation of a boss harassing a secretary — sexual innuendoes, proposals, mind games. She finally quit.

- A woman consistently treated differently than other male managers in the workplace. She was required to do her job, plus given all additional tasks to ensure that the Branch operates smoothly. She was consistently not invited or allowed to attend meetings to debrief (i.e., information tools needed to do the job) while male managers were always invited.

- Generally it is very subtle — more a question of attitudes (e.g., not paying attention when a woman talks) than anything. However, I was harassed by my boss, who was incapable of assessing my work objectively and wrote negative and unsubstantiated things on my appraisal which required correction from the DM level.

Question: Is work more stressful than it was a few years ago?

(Women)

- The workload is heavier, responsibilities are greater, and there is a much smaller margin for error. There is constant insecurity, downsizing. [F]

- Public opinion of the federal government is low. This puts more pressure on civil servants dealing with the industry. Do more with less and do it faster!

- Budget reductions/downsizing; changing from traditional style of management to the participatory style.

- Constraints have led to the philosophy of doing "more with less." Senior managers tend to turn a blind eye to the hours of extra effort that workload demands. There is the additional stress factor that "best" isn't good enough. It has to be better than best.

- I have more responsibility; I have a young child who needs me more than I have time to give; my department is integrating with another; considerable ambiguity of roles; no defined future job; no indication that anyone "on high" values my work or contribution.

- Fewer resources. The higher one goes, the more one cannot help becoming aware of hitting the glass ceiling and the great need for cultural change in the Public Service — to practise what is preached in human resources management.

(Men)

- Volume and complexity of work is increasing and resources (financial and human) to accomplish the work are decreasing. Uncertainty of the future (will there be a job — never mind a "career") leads to stress.

Question: In your experience, do men carry the same workload as women in the home? In what way? Has the situation changed over the last few years?

(*Women*)

- Personal experience of equality doesn't happen theoretically or practically for women with a husband. It is always a double load [for women] whatever one says. Furthermore, those men who carry some of the family load are treated like heroes. [F]

- No, women tend to have more responsibility for the family. Even when men "pitch in" it's usually only after they are asked — therefore it's a favour.

- No! Not only do women do most of the work, they are "responsible" for work husband/partner/kids. I get many jobs by default (someone has to do it). Societal pressure — which criticizes women personally if it doesn't meet expected standards — keeps women in [a] catch 22 [situation]. Damned if you do, damned if you don't.

- My own personal experience was an equitable one. I am aware, however, that it is not the case for many women (including most of my female friends who are single parents).

- No, because of "traditional" upbringing in my case it has taken me 25-plus years to "sensitize" my husband. In general, I see positive changes in today's generation.

- No, in single-parent homes the children are more often with the mother and she does more of the organizing. There are more single mothers. In two-parent homes the men often help more than 20 years ago.

- No, they don't. The women in my circle of friends/acquaintances all say that they do the household managing, i.e., making decisions about menus, child care, etc. Men may participate more than before in the executing (i.e., taking children to baby-sitting; making a meal), but that is the easy end of the task.

- No. Probably getting better, but women still get the real bulk of family organizational responsibilities.

- No, but the situation is gradually changing for the better. Men have not been brought up to notice what needs doing around the home and hence have a difficult learning curve (that is also very frustrating for the female).

- Women still have primary responsibility for the home, although in many more cases than in the past men are assuming a greater share of the domestic duties.

- Yes and no. Yes, it has changed in recent years. It is difficult to define work in the home, there is a tendency to define it too narrowly in many cases (e.g., to be extreme). If men cook meals this often [it] is redefined to be a hobby.

- No. More men help out than previously but it is nowhere near a 50-50 split. Change is occurring gradually. I only see substantial change when comparing generations.

Question: Do you believe that men and women bring different characteristics and ways of thinking to the job?

(*Women*)

- In general, women promote certain values (that we are now beginning to appreciate) such as: sharing, collaboration, ideals — which run counter to the traditional patriarchal bureaucratic values based on power, conquest, competition, etc. [F]

- Women tend to bring a broader involvement (team approach) into their management style while men are more dictatorial.

- Women are more participative, consulting, need to discuss in more detail while men are more competitive and individualistic.

- Very often bring a different focus to events/situations. Women tend to be much more analytical — better interpersonal relations/situations.

- Women are more team-oriented; less competitive (usually) and more willing to admit what they do not know — but some men are now becoming more like this.

- Women tend to be more inclusive and cooperative in their management style. Consensus building is a more common management style with women.

- In general, women are more people-oriented and frequently are less likely to be empire builders. The majority of women like to get along well with others and please others as they were raised thus.

- I think the perception is there that they do, but I disagree. It is more a general factor of attitude to life which varies among both men and women.

- Differences may be cultural/environmental. I find women frequently (not always) more reliable to deliver, very exhaustive in pulling information together to produce a product, less aggressive about getting out and making contacts with others. Sometimes for this reason they are less creative. Management styles are much more "cooperative."

- In my experience, women are better [able] to encompass all aspects of an issue including the human dimension. Also, they are more effective leaders while men maintain, to a large extent, the manager approach.

- Yes and no, depending on the individual. More women than men tend to actually implement teamwork and good human resource management approaches. Less women tend to get involved in ego-bashing and turf wars.

- Women are more task-oriented and look for ways to cooperate with others to get the job done, tend to be good communicators. Men often bully their way through to their objective and hide information rather than communicate and draw women in.

(Men)

- Women are, perhaps, more patient and tolerant. The differences are not significant.

- I think there are fundamental differences, primarily with respect to interpersonal relations, but they are hard to summarize succinctly and there are many exceptions, for example, I think, on average, women are better listeners and better at redefining a task if it doesn't make sense to start with, instead of just following through. But there are many exceptions.

- Generally, men still perceive themselves as breadwinners. They are more likely to let home life (family life) suffer because they are addicted to work. Women probably have a more balanced approach.

- Just as all individuals bring their own perspective these things are based on life experiences, so to me it is obvious that women would bring different point of views from men.

- Generally, women seek consensus and solutions that satisfy the group. Men tend to pursue the "logical" solution to problems. Also, men tend to be more egocentric while women usually work towards the betterment of the group (although many successful women are as egocentric as men or more so).

- Generally, women who have attained a certain level have had to often overcome barriers at their place of work, for example, [they succeed] despite the old-boys' network. [F]

Question: Please describe the most critical event which has occurred during your career that has influenced the way you manage or interact with your work colleagues.

(*Women*)

- The fact that my director had confidence in me and chose me as the acting manager over a group of middle-aged men convinced me that I had potential. [F]

- Many things. But certainly, an important one is the career management course for women. [F]

- One manager isolated himself in his corner office — never consulted with colleagues nor employees (except those reporting directly to him). Morale was lousy, productivity could have been better. This was my best example of how not to manage.

- Working for one male supervisor who mentored me, encouraged me, increased my self-confidence.

- Working in a male-dominated profession made me more aware of how men interact with other men in a work situation and how women are frequently excluded from the networking and power sharing that goes on.

- Increased pressures/limited time have sharpened the management skills.

- Having a woman DM who cared about people issues.

- Most critical event was having an excellent mentor (boss) early in my career who has been helpful in counselling me ever since. Provided a good role model for my policy analysis work, and set an excellent example of how to manage others.

- I had a very senior boss who valued my aggressive, noisy style and my point of view. I grew to value these also and to see them as complementary to others with different styles. I learned that many types make up a team and while the decisions in the end are not democratic, good teamwork leads to better decisions. This boss has stayed very successful and respected.

- When I had my first baby in 1984, my department took away my "superior" rating because I took leave. Fighting that, as a term employee "built character" for the rest of my career.

(Men)

- When working on a large complex project, the latitude, flexibility, and trust my manager had in me, has definitely influenced the way I manage others.

- Training — I have been fortunate to be subjected to a great deal of managerial training starting from the trendy Japanese control circles right to today's emphasis on enhancing people's jobs and team decision making.

ROLES OF EX ENTRY LEVEL FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Type of Role	Managers Only	Specialists Only	Both Managers and Specialists
Men	14	13	14
Women	21	9	9